Deconstructing the Modern Subject: Negotiating Identity in Pablo Picasso's *Kahnweiler* and Gertrude Stein's *Picasso*

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Abstract

This thesis examines visual and linguistic representations of personal identity through a comparative analysis of Pablo Picasso's Cubist portrait of art dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler (1910) and Gertrude Stein's literary portrait of Picasso (1909). In particular, I explore how Picasso's and Stein's experiments with, and challenges to, the genre of portraiture during the early twentieth century demonstrate that the very concept of identity was understood as malleable and functionally contingent upon social and cultural practices. In the first section, an overview of the history of portraiture in the European tradition reveals how *Kahnweiler* and *Picasso* deviate from (or conform to) earlier representational strategies. More specifically, I consider how Picasso and Stein used fragmentation and repetition to build the subjects of their respective portraits from a simplified lexicon of geometric and linguist signs, generating a relatively self-referential system of similarity and difference. The second section examines the strengths and limitations of various semiotically-informed approaches to explore how Picasso and Stein constructed their respective subjects through a loose network of associations rather than by virtue of fidelity to physical appearance. In the third section, I engage with contemporary philosophies of space and experience to reflect on how the heavily stylized subjects presented in *Kahnweiler* and *Picasso* speak to the mutually-informative relationships amongst perception, conception, and representation. Ultimately, I argue that the conventions of portraiture were re-imagined by Picasso and Stein to provide new expressions of the body, individuality, and experienced reality.

Résumé

Ce mémoire de maîtrise examine les représentations visuelles et linguistiques de l'identité personnelle par une analyse comparative du portrait cubiste du marchand d'art Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler peint par Pablo Picasso (1910) et du portrait littéraire du Picasso écrit par Gertrude Stein (1909). En particulier, j'examine comment Picasso et Stein ont traité le genre du portrait au début du vingtième siècle et comment cela démontre que le concept même de l'identité a été entendu en tant que fluide et dépendant de pratiques sociales et culturelles. Dans le premier volet, un apercu de l'histoire du portrait dans la tradition européenne démontre comment *Kahnweiler* et *Picasso* se sont écartés ou se sont conformés aux stratégies représentatives du passé. Plus spécifiquement, je considère comment Picasso et Stein ont utilisé la fragmentation et la répétition pour établir les sujets de leurs portraits respectifs à partir d'un lexique simplifié des signes géométriques et linguistiques, qui génère un système relativement autoréférentiel de similitude et de différence. Le deuxième volet examine les forces et les limites de diverses approches sémiotiques pour explorer comment Picasso et Stein ont construit leurs sujets respectifs par un réseau libre d'associations plutôt qu'en vertu de la fidélité à l'aspect physique. Dans le troisième volet, je discute des philosophies contemporaines de l'espace et de l'expérience pour considérer comment les sujets fortement stylisés présentés dans *Kahnweiler* et *Picasso* démontrent les rapports entre la perception, la conception, et la représentation. Finalement, je soutiens que les conventions de portraiture ont été ré-imaginées par Picasso et Stein pour fournir de nouvelles expressions du corps, de l'individualité, et de la réalité telle qu'elle est expérimentée.

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INTRODUCTION

"Portraits of men and women and children are differently felt in every generation and by a generation one means any period of time."

– Gertrude Stein[1]

In autumn of 1910, Pablo Picasso painted a portrait of renowned Cubist art dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler (Fig. 1).[2] Kahnweiler was an art historian, collector, and gallery owner, as well as Picasso's and Georges Braque's art dealer during the rise of Cubism in the early twentieth century.[3] The half-length portrait of Kahnweiler shows the art dealer from the waist up, facing forward, surrounded by a series of objects. It is composed of a collection of repetitive angular shapes and lines, exhibits a limited colour palette of greys, browns, and muted ochres, and uses tonal variation to suggest three-dimensional forms. The figure's head, made up of translucent, intersecting rectangular planes, can be found in the composition's upper-third segment, resting to the slight right of the picture plane's longitudinal axis. Five curved arcs indicate Kahnweiler's combed and parted hairstyle, two inverted trapezoids suggest a set of eyes, and an elongated quadrilateral that runs perpendicularly between them alludes to the figure's nose. Below this geometric configuration which loosely resembles the sitter's head lay a pair of rectangles, each broken up into three sections by two vertical lines, that evoke a pair of crossed hands. A small still-life, which depicts a group of medicine bottles and a few books, is located in

[1] Gertrude Stein, "Portraits and Repetition," in *Lectures in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1935), 165.

[2] Kahnweiler was born in Mannheim, Germany in 1884 and died in Paris, France in 1979.

[3] On the guidance of art dealer Wilhem Uhde, Kahnweiler first visited Picasso's studio in the summer of 1907. He bought three of Picasso's gouache paintings and continued to support the artist throughout the early twentieth century. See Pierre Cabanne, *Cubism* (Paris, France: Terrail, 2001), 18. For more on Kahnweiler's and Picasso's professional relationship, see Elizabeth Cowling, "The Styles of Cubism 1908 – 1914," in *Picasso: Style and Meaning* (London; New York: Phaidon Press, 2002), 200–271. Kahnweiler was also the subject of various interviews concerning Picasso and the Cubist movement from 1912 onwards. See Marcia Pointon, "Kahnweiler's Picasso; Picasso's Kahnweiler," in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 190. See also Y.A. Bois, "Kahnweiler's Lesson," in *Painting as Model* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990), 33–35.

the bottom left-hand corner, and a pair of wooden statues from New Caledonia are to the slight left of the figure's head.[4] The portrait was the property of Kahnweiler until the end of World War I in 1918, when it was seized – along with the majority of his property – by the French government. Its next owner was Swedish painter Isaac Grünewald, who purchased it at an auction for around 2000 francs. In 1934, the portrait was sold to a private collector in America who eventually gave it to the Art Institute of Chicago in 1948.[5]

When reflecting upon this particular work, the deliberate abandonment of the standard mimetic relationship between the portrait and the sitter is impossible to ignore. Instead of representing Kahnweiler by way of fidelity to visual appearance, Picasso employed a simplified lexicon of geometric shapes to construct his sitter through fragmentation and repetition. Kahnweiler's portrait was painted during what is often referred to as the "Analytical" period of Cubism, usually dated from around summer 1909 to late 1911.[6] Analytical Cubism is commonly understood as the early stage of Cubism wherein Picasso and Braque deconstructed their subjects by organizing multiple overlapping viewpoints upon a single two-dimensional picture plane.[7] Many accounts of Cubism have shown how images produced by Picasso during this period demonstrate that the artist experimented with figural representation by breaking down the body

[4] These objects have been identified by Douglas Cooper, Richard Brilliant, and Roland Penrose. See Cooper, *The Cubist Epoch* (London: Phaidon in association with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art; New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 50–51; Brilliant, *Portraiture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 152; Penrose, "Picasso's Portrait of Kahnweiler," *The Burlington Magazine* 116, no. 852 (March 1974): 126.
[5] Penrose, "Picasso's Portrait of Kahnweiler," 130.
[6] "Analytical Cubism" preceded "Synthetic Cubism," which is a term used to refer to the period from around 1912–1914 when artists such as Picasso and Braque began to incorporate additional materials, such as newsprint, into their compositions. See John Golding, *Cubism: A History and an Analysis: 1907–1914, 2nd Ed.* (London: Faber & Faber, 1968), 80–87; 114.
[7] Ibid.

into a geometric configuration of intersecting planes instead of fortifying its integrity as a unified form.[8]

The representational strategies of such techniques have largely been theorized through the lens of semiotics.[9] For example, in 1920, the Russian-American linguist Roman Jakobson drew an essential connection between Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (1916) and Cubism.[10] Saussure was a Swiss linguist and semiotician, and his seminal text was compiled from notes on lectures that he gave at the University of Geneva between 1906 and 1911. In *Course in General Linguistics*, Saussure broadly defines semiotics as the study of how language functions in human societies.[11] He argued that language is an internally-contingent system governed by a set of rules through which words may come to express ideas. The principal concept underlying Saussure's methodological approach, referred to as semiology at the time of its inception, is the linguistic sign, composed of the signifier (the word) and the signified (the thing or concept in the world to which it refers).[12]

Jakobson, amongst other scholars who were interested in how Cubist works constructed meaning, recognized that the relationship between the signifier and the signified could serve a wide range of applications outside of the study of linguistic sign systems.[13] Looking chiefly to Saussure's theorization of linguistic meaning-making, Jakobson conceptualized a sign system as fundamentally composed of similarities and differences; he claimed that meaning is not derived

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[8] Ibid. See also Pepe Karmel, *Picasso and the Invention of Cubism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 14; Tamar Garb, *The Painted Face: Portraits of Women in France, 1814–1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 206.
[9] For a brief overview of the discourse surrounding semiotics and Cubism, see Francis Frascina, "Realism and Ideology: An Introduction to Semiotics and Cubism," in *Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction*: *The Early Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press with the Open University, 1993), 87–183.
[10] Frascina, "Realism and Ideology," 100.
[11] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), 6–17.
[12] Ibid., 65.
[13] Throughout the early twentieth century, similar approaches were undertaken by art historians and critics such as Paul Reverdy, Amédée Ozenfant, Pierre Jeanneret, Waldermar George, and Kahnweiler. See pages 21–22; 31–32.

from the signifying function of the individual word or visual sign alone but, rather, from the similarities and differences between signs and their combinations within the complete structure of a sentence or picture frame.[14] Subsequent semiotically-informed approaches, such as those advanced in the 1980s and 1990s by art historians and critics Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, similarly argue that Cubist works are self-contained referential systems of simplified geometric shapes. From a broadly conceived semiotic approach, the intersecting lines and planes that make up an image attain and displace signifying value solely in relation to one another rather than by any visual resemblance they may bear to that which they represent.

Through a comprehensive analysis of Picasso's *Kahnweiler*, this thesis will argue that the portrait stages a tension between representational and abstract forms of signification. This interplay of forms permits the positive identification of the sitter and establishes a relationally contingent framework through which the non-representational aspects of the image may become legible. As such, the portrait is not just a hermetic system of cleverly placed, arbitrary geometric forms but, instead, uses recognizable features to establish a sufficient context for their interpretation. This manner of portrait making, I will argue, emphasizes the relationally and contextually contingent aspects of subjectivity, experienced visual reality, and personal identity.

Further, this thesis will expand to consider how such an approach to portraiture finds its linguistic parallel in the literary portrait poems by writer and art collector Gertrude Stein. Originally from Pennsylvania, Stein moved to Paris in 1903 with her brother Leo. Until 1914, the pair accumulated a sizable collection of artworks by up-and-coming artists, such as Picasso, Paul Cézanne, and Henri Matisse, and held frequent gatherings at their salon, located at 27 rue de

[14] Bois, "Kahnweiler's Lesson," 49.

Fleurus.[15] In 1909, Stein wrote a literary portrait poem of Picasso (Figs. 2a, 2b). At the time, the two had a particularly close personal and professional relationship. Stein purchased and displayed much of Picasso's work, and so – like Kahnweiler – provided the artist with financial security and helped build his reputation.[16]

Stein's *Picasso* first appeared in the August 1912 volume of *Camera Work* magazine, edited and published by Alfred Stieglitz in New York, along with her literary portrait of Matisse.[17] The two-page poem, composed of twelve stanzas, offers the reader a vague account of Picasso's actions and character. Much like Picasso's *Kahnweiler*, Stein's *Picasso* deviates from the more descriptive conventions of portraiture, rejecting the traditional chronology of narrative prose in favour of fragmentation and repetition. What is more, *Picasso* largely abandons expository language and, instead, employs a simplified vocabulary to express the subject as a series of self-similar iterations. As exemplified by the following excerpt from the poem, this is achieved through the use of verbs in the past continuous and past perfect continuous tenses:

> One whom some were certainly following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were certainly following was one who was charming. One whom some were following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were following was one who was certainly completely charming …
>
> This one was working and something was coming then, something was coming out of this one then. This one was one and always there was something coming out of this one and always there had been something coming out of this one. This one was one having something coming out of this one. This one had been one whom some were following. This one was one whom some were following. This one was being one whom some were following. This one was one who was working.
>
> This one was one who was working. This one was one being one having something being coming out of him. This one was one being one having something being coming out of him. This one was one going on having something come out of him. This one was one going on working. This one was one whom some were following. This one was one who was working …[18]

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[15] For photographs of the Steins' salon, see "27 rue de Fleurus, 1906 – 1914/15," in *Four Americans in Paris: The Collections of Gertrude Stein and her Family*, John B. Hightower, Margaret Potter, Irene Gordon et al. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 87–95.

[16] While scholars have argued about the significance of Stein's contributions to the development of Picasso's Cubism, the close relationship the two shared during this period is well documented and remains undisputed. See Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten (eds), *A Cubism Reader: Documents and Criticism, 1906–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 52.

[17] Ulla Haselstein, "Gertrude Stein's Portraits of Matisse and Picasso," *New Literary History* 34, no. 4 (Autumn 2003): 731.

[18] Gertrude Stein, *Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein*, ed. Carl Van Vechten (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 333–35.

The formal and conceptual parallelism between Picasso's Analytical Cubist portraits and Stein's literary ones have, indeed, been recognized by art critics and historians since the early-to-mid twentieth century.[19] In the July 1939 edition of *The New Republic*, Nathalie Swan's review of Stein's *Picasso* drew an explicit connection between the writer's literary portrait and Cubism: "The literary portrait of Picasso is drawn in a Cubist manner … the seen elements are isolated, broken down, reassembled; and as the figure represented gradually emerges, one is not surprised to recognize a strong resemblance to Gertrude Stein."[20] Like Picasso's portrait of Kahnweiler, Stein's portrait of Picasso modifies the representational strategies of her chosen medium by fragmenting the subject through a simplified vocabulary and building him back up through syntactic repetition. In *Picasso*, I will argue, Stein constructed the subject through the process of interpersonal encounter by documenting her own perceptions of Picasso and rendering them in her particular stylistic idiom. As such, Stein's literary portrait similarly highlights the relationally contingent aspects of personal identity.

This thesis will focus on *Kahnweiler* and *Picasso* to explore Picasso's and Stein's radical rethinking of portraiture. Through a comparative analysis of the two works, I will examine the relationships between visual and linguistic representational strategies and investigate how previous conventions embedded within the genre were re-imagined to offer alternative

[19] In 1912, Stieglitz wrote that Stein's literary portraits exhibit "a relation exactly analogous to that borne by the work of the men whom they treat … So close, indeed, is this analogy that they will doubtless be regarded by many as no less absurd, unintelligible, radical or revolutionary than the so-called vagaries of the painters whom they seek to interpret." Quoted in Wendy Steiner, *Exact Resemblance to Exact Resemblance: The Literary Portraiture of Gertrude Stein* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 159; Similarly, in 1913, avant-garde journalist Mabel Dodge claimed that "Stein could do with words what Picasso did with paint." Quoted in Cabanne, *Cubism*, 166; Similar claims have been made more recently by scholars such as Wendy Steiner and Randa Dubnick, who draw a relationship between Analytical Cubism and Stein's literary portraits. See Steiner, *Exact Resemblance*, 131–160; Dubnick, *The Structure of Obscurity: Gertrude Stein, Language, and Cubism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 17; 23.

[20] Quoted in Kirk Curnutt, *The Critical Response to Gertrude Stein* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000), 109.

frameworks through which subjectivity and identity were represented. In the first section of this thesis, a succinct overview of the history of portraiture in the European tradition will demonstrate the ways in which *Kahnweiler* and *Picasso* deviate from earlier representational strategies, and thus obscure the relationship between portrait and sitter, whilst also making use of such strategies in order to stage their aesthetic interventions. The second section will explore the strengths and limitations of various semiotically-informed approaches to explore how Picasso and Stein constructed their respective subjects through a loose network of associations. In the third section, I will engage with contemporary philosophies of space and experience to examine how the heavily stylized subjects presented in *Kahnweiler* and *Picasso* speak to the mutually-informative relationships amongst perception, conception, and representation. Ultimately, I will argue that art making, much like language, is a philosophical practice of conceptual organization. It is an epistemologically and existentially motivated exercise through which the subject to be apprehended – whether it be the self or the other – is continually constructed and deconstructed in relation to the surrounding socio-cultural environment and the way that environment is mediated through representational strategies.

1. DESTABILIZING MIMESIS: "LIKENESS" AND RENDERING THE SUBJECT PRESENT

Many accounts of portraiture have shown how the stylistic developments of the genre were informed by socio-historically contingent notions of identity, subjectivity, and representation.[21] For example, in early fifteenth-century Europe, the custom of commissioning

[21] See William Rubin and Anne Baldassari (eds), *Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transformation* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1996); Heather McPherson, *The Modern Portrait in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Tamar Garb, *The Painted Face* and *Bodies of Modernity: Figure and Flesh in fin-de-siècle France* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998); Marcia Pointon, *Portrayal and the Search for Identity* (London: Reaktion, 2013); Norbert Schneider, *The Art of the Portrait:*

painted portraits marked the beginning of the genre's commercialization.[22] Portraits from this period primarily provided a faithful rendering of the portrayed individual's external features by way of pictorial verisimilitude.[23] This emphasis on fidelity to physical appearance is largely indebted to Western culture's reliance on empiricism, which stressed that pictorial representations should offer a resemblance that is "true to life."[24] A life-like depiction of the portrayed individual was seen to endow the portrait with authenticity and also permitted the positive identification of the sitter. In such instances, the portrait signified the individual in the world to whom it referred through exact (or as exact as could be rendered in paint) resemblance.

From the sixteenth century onward, a greater emphasis was placed on the artist's portrayal of the sitter's social role and status.[25] As Marcia Pointon states, the social identity of the sitter was chiefly articulated symbolically by way of props and accessories.[26] In Hans Holbein the Younger's 1532 portrait of merchant Georg Gisze (Fig. 3), for example, the sitter is depicted in a detailed setting with particular objects, such as a writing stand, sealing wax, and scissors, which indicate that the subject is in his workroom. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the expression of the sitter's psychology and inward states became an increasing concern within the genre.[27] However, the principal representational function of

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Masterpieces of European Portrait-Painting, 1420–1670 (Köln; London: Taschen, 2002); Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991); Shearer West, *Portraiture* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[22] West, *Portraiture*, 15; Schneider, *The Art of the Portrait*, 6.

[23] Schneider, *The Art of the Portrait,* 6.

[24] West, *Portraiture*, 26.

[25] Heather McPherson outlines that this development is concurrent with the rise of humanism and individualism as well as the proliferation of biographical and autobiographical texts. See McPherson, *The Modern Portrait in Nineteenth-Century France,* 3. Norbert Schneider argues that this gradual shift is indebted to seventeenth-century Neo-Stoicist ideals of constancy, which posited a "consistent sense of self" that persists over time, and Hegel's *Aesthetics* (1835), wherein the German idealist philosopher argued that the portraitist should offer "a view which emphasizes the subject's general character and lasting spiritual qualities." See Schneider, *The Art of the Portrait,* 14–15.

[26] Pointon, *Portrayal and the Search for Identity*, 15.

[27] McPherson, *The Modern Portrait*, 4. During the seventeenth century, the terms "portrait" and "likeness" simply denoted "pictorial imitation"; rather than referring to the visual rendering of a specific human individual, the concept

portraiture – to present a pictorial likeness of an identifiable individual – persisted until the nineteenth century.[28]

PORTRAITURE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

By the nineteenth century, many artists earned their reputations and the majority of their financial income from portrait commissions due to the promotional value of displaying portraits publicly.[29] As such, argues Tamar Garb, nineteenth-century French portraiture was heavily invested in the visual transmission of the sitter's social class and professional distinction.[30] Prominent portrait painters from this period, including Thomas Eakins, John Singer Sargent, and Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, produced several portraits of wealthy men and women, socialites, and professionals. As Garb elucidates, the nineteenth-century portrait depended on a "unified subject" whose individuality was expressed by the marking of his or her distinctive features upon the picture plane.[31] While the sitter's social identity was communicated in part by way of his or her dress – hats, gloves, umbrellas, and canes were often used to convey the sitter's status as a professional gentleman, for example – nineteenth-century artists also achieved popularity by showing portraits that alluded to the inward states and moral attitudes of their subjects through the rendering of gesture and expression.[32] More generally, artists and critics alike came to think it was more important to communicate a sense of the sitter's character and

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of the "portrait" referred to the practice of visual representation more generally. In the late seventeenth century, French art historian André Félibien proposed that the term "portrait" should be reserved solely for works which represent human individuals. See Schneider, *The Art of the Portrait*, 10.

[28] McPherson, *The Modern Portrait*, 4.

[29] Ibid. See also Mary Hunter, "The Makings of a Scientific Hero: Portraits of Louis Pasteur," in *The Face of Medicine*: *Visualizing Medical Masculinities in Late Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 37–107.

[30] Garb, *Bodies of Modernity*, 35.

[31] Garb, *The Painted Face,* 197.

[32] Garb, *Bodies of Modernity*, 35; McPherson, *The Modern Portrait*, 4; Carol Armstrong, "Duranty on Degas," in *Odd Man Out: Readings of the Work and Reputation of Edgar Degas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

being rather than to reproduce an exact pictorial likeness. In other words, a portrait should not only replicate a sitter's appearance and explain his social role, but should also communicate information about his disposition.

The advent and commercialization of photography, which could provide a nearly exact likeness without necessarily portraying the character of the sitter, is often cited as a catalyst for this shift in the representational aims of the painted portrait.[33] Anne McCauley, for instance, argues that photography was "synonymous with portraiture" by the 1840s as the majority of published photographs were portraits of human subjects.[34] The earliest portrait photographs, notes Graham Clarke, were "mirror-images of those photographed" that "insisted on their realism."[35] Indeed, discourse on photography published in mid nineteenth-century newspapers and magazines noted that the new medium could satisfy the representational desire for verisimilitude of portrait painting.[36] However, writers generally agreed that the mechanical aspects of the medium limited the capacity of the final product to evince the individual character and human qualities of the sitter.[37] Seeing as photography could reproduce the appearance of the sitter with relative ease, scholars such as John Gage and William Rubin have argued that the painted portrait was ostensibly liberated from its obligation to capture the subject by way of

[33] Photography had a particularly strong impact on the genre of painted portraiture in Paris, which had the largest photographic market in France. See Anne McCauley, *Industrial Madness: Commercial Photography in Paris, 1848–71* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 2. See also Rubin and Baldassari, *Picasso and Portraiture*, 9; McPherson, *The Modern Portrait*, 3; West, *Portraiture*, 187.
[34] While the majority of photographic portraits were images of celebrities produced for public circulation (by 1860, celebrity portraits accounted for 43.8% of registered photograph titles), private portrait photography was available to middle-class citizens as a leisure or novelty product. See McCauley, *Industrial Madness*, 74; 97; 122. See also Roger Cardinal, "Nadar and the Photographic Portrait in Nineteenth-Century France," in *The Portrait in Photography*, ed. Graham Clarke (London: Reaktion, 1992), 6.
[35] Graham Clarke, introduction to *The Portrait in Photography,* 1.
[36] McCauley, *Industrial Madness,* 14.
[37] Ibid.

pictorial verisimilitude and, instead, could take as its primary focus the communication of the subject's character.[38]

In 1876, French art critic and poet Edmond Duranty argued that social class and character could be made legible through the rendering of gesture, clothing, and setting.[39] In his introduction to the accompanying catalogue of the Impressionist exhibition, entitled *La Nouvelle Peinture*, he wrote the following: "… we desire that the temperament should be revealed, the social class; with a pair of hands, we must express a magistrate or merchant; with one gesture, a whole series of sentiments …"[40] As Carol Armstrong maintains, Duranty was interested in physiognomic theories as a "semiotics of human history and society"; he insisted that each visual aspect of the human form could be "read" to provide supplementary information about the subject's social identity or inward states.[41] The rendering of a gesture or expression, Duranty claimed, could do more to portray character than an exact photographic depiction. However, as visible features were thought to signify non-visual attributes of the sitter, the ability of a portrait to communicate a subject's character was still reliant on an artist's capacity to faithfully render aspects of his or her appearance. Mimesis was not abandoned entirely but, rather, was an essential component of the more comprehensive representational aims of the image – to capture the non-visual aspects of the sitter's character as they were thought to manifest as tangible forms that could be apprehended (and decoded) visually.

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[38] John Gage, "Photographic Likeness," in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 120–123. See also Rubin and Baldassari, *Picasso and Portraiture*, 9

[39] This sentiment was also articulated by novelist and critic Charles Baudelaire. In 1859, Baudelaire wrote that "nothing in a portrait is a matter of indifference. Gesture, grimace, clothing, even décor–all must serve to realize a character." Quoted in McPherson, *The Modern Portrait*, 14.

[40] Edmond Duranty, *La Nouvelle Peinture, à propos du groupe d'artistes qui exposent dans les Galeries Durand-Ruel* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1876): 42–3; 45–7. Translation in Armstrong, "Duranty on Degas," 75–6.

[41] Armstrong, "Duranty on Degas," 74–87. Michael Fried also explores the relationship between figural representation and physiognomy in Manet's late nineteenth-century works. See Fried, *Manet's Modernism or, The Face of Painting in the 1860s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 302.

Edgar Degas's 1879 *Portrait of Edmond Duranty* (Fig. 4), for example, depicts the critic and writer in a moment of thoughtful contemplation as he sits in his study. While the amply filled bookshelves suggest that Duranty was well educated and the large stacks of paper on the desk imply his profession as a writer, these symbolic representations of his social and professional identity are vaguely rendered; each book is represented by a roughly-delineated vertical rectangle of uniform colour and the edges of the papers are loosely defined by faint lines. The majority of detail is instead paid to Duranty's facial expression and the positioning of his hands. The critic's left index and middle finger press gently into his temple, the palm of his hand cradling his head as he calmly gazes out beyond the picture frame's right edge. The slightly bent fingers of Duranty's right hand rest daintily atop his desk. By emphasizing the sitter's facial expression and mannerisms, Degas's portrait of Duranty exemplifies that the rendering of physical appearance and embodied gesture was considered an essential method through which to communicate the portrayed individual's character.

Anthea Callen has shown how physiognomic models of representation in art had their bases in the pseudo-scientific anatomical and anthropological treatises of Petrus Camper (1791), Césare Lombroso (1870), and Duval and Bical (1890).[42] Such theories were visualized in manuals for artists by Charles Lebrun (1698) and Johann Caspar Lavater (1770s), and popular books of "urban types" that were published in the hundreds from the 1830s-1850s, such as E. Curmer's *Le français peint par eux-mêmes* (1840-42).[43] These theories and manuals suggested a direct relationship between an individual's appearance and character; the sitter's physical attributes were thought to serve as an accurate representational tool for communicating

[42] Anthea Callen, "Physiognomy and Difference," in *The Spectacular Body: Science, Method, and Meaning in the Work of Degas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 1; 7–12; 4–5; 6.
[43] Ibid.

information about behaviour and personality. Throughout this period of urban development in Paris, physiognomic pictorial codes worked to construct a visual classification system, and so determined a "hierarchy of social types" that both satisfied a need for order and expressed the supremacy of "the visual" within bourgeois society.[44] As such, the stylistic changes and developments of the genre during the nineteenth century can best be understood as inextricably bound to both the social function of portraiture and the contemporaneous theories that informed how identity was thought to be expressed and represented visually.

As Pointon has argued, the concept of "likeness" or "resemblance" is not a fixed, trans-historical absolute but, instead, is a product of stylistic conventions that are grounded in the social expectations of a specific place and moment in time.[45] Given that portraiture takes as its subject the individual human sitter, the shifting stylistic conventions employed by artists working with the genre are intimately connected to, if not entirely emergent from, socio-historically grounded notions of identity and representation. With this in mind, the representational strategies and stylistic techniques employed to depict human subjects can also be understood as expressions of the aesthetic, technical, and professional interests of artists engaged with the genre.

PAINTERLY EXPERIMENTATION

Certainly, different styles, movements, artists, and approaches changed the face of portraiture. The second half of the nineteenth century, for example, marked the beginning of several stylistic challenges to more mimetic representational strategies. Heather McPherson argues that the modern portrait is characterized by a "self-reflexing questioning of the premises

[44] Ibid., 5.
[45] Pointon, *Portrayal*, 17; West, *Portraiture*, 22.

of representation and its stylistic indeterminacy."[46] Ingres's life-like 1853 *Portrait of the Princesse de Broglie* (Fig. 5), she asserts, marked "the end of a certain traditional notion of portraiture premised on precise physical detail combined with the godlike ability to intuit a timeless image of the subject's public persona and inner psyche…"[47] As the nineteenth century progressed, a diverse range of visual techniques were deployed by artists, including those associated with Impressionism, such as Degas, Edouard Manet, Berthe Morisot, and Cézanne, and those linked to later movements, such as Matisse and Picasso, to rethink and expand the expressive capacities of portraiture. Rubin claims that these modern painters, now emancipated from the duty of reproducing the physical appearances of their subjects with the utmost fidelity, were "destined to make more explicit those subjective aspects of nature that had formerly been implied."[48] Such artists challenged previous representational practices associated with portraiture – and with mimetic imagery more generally – in order to articulate their own technical and stylistic interests.[49]

Of particular importance to the emergence of Cubist portraiture is Cézanne's experimentation with space, perspective, and figural representation during the late nineteenth century, which has repeatedly been identified as the principal stylistic influence under which the early stages of Picasso's and Braque's Analytical Cubism developed.[50] In her comprehensive study of Cézanne's numerous portraits of his wife Fiquet, Susan Sidlauskas argues that the artist

[46] McPherson, *The Modern Portrait*, 4.
[47] Ibid., 3.
[48] Rubin and Baldassari, *Picasso and Portraiture*, 9.
[49] West, *Portraiture*, 195.
[50] See Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten (eds), *Cubism and Culture* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2001), 7; Cabanne, *Cubism*, 12–26; Karmel, *Picasso and the Invention of Cubism*, 1; 38–40; Neil Cox, *The Picasso Book* (London: Tate Publishing, 2010), 36; Cooper, *The Cubist Epoch*, 18–20; Pointon, 'Kahnweiler's Picasso; Picasso's Kahnweiler,' 195; Tony Robbin, *Shadows of Reality: The Fourth Dimension in Relativity, Cubism, and Modern Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 28; Alfred H. Barr Jr., *Cubism and Abstract Art* (New York: Arno Press,1966), 30. I will discuss Cézanne's approach to space in the third section.

liberated the portrait from mimesis and its ties to resemblance.[51] As she notes, the many portraits of Fiquet are characterized by masked faces, bifurcated forms, and their immense variability to defy notions of resemblance or attribution to one particular referent. Without their titles, Sidlauskas maintains, the portraits would be "hardly recognizable" as representations of the same person.[52] For example, two head-and-shoulders portraits of Fiquet dated to 1885–1887 (Fig. 6) and 1886–1887 (Fig. 7) show the subject from a similar angle yet display dramatically different facial structures. While the earlier portrait depicts Fiquet with full cheeks, her face exhibits a significantly more gaunt and elongated shape in the later rendition. Further, the later portrait pictures Fiquet with a noticeably more up-turned nose. Here, the outward appearance of the named individual is subordinated to the stylistic idiom through which her likeness is represented.

In the early twentieth century, Picasso's experiments with figural representation, like those of Cézanne, signaled a radical departure from more mimetic portraiture. In his 1909 portrait of Parisian art dealer Clovis Sagot (Fig. 8), for example, areas of localized colour mark out distinct masses while tonal variations emphasize their volumes, creating a sense of shallow relief that makes the figure appear almost sculptural. The painting, like Picasso's portrait of Kahnweiler, also displays a limited colour palette: ochres delineate Sagot's face and indicate the lighted areas of the four vertical planes which make up the picture's background; dark blues define the figure's facial hair, suit, and suggest areas of shadow. Picasso's Sagot portrait, shown at the first Post-Impressionist exhibition in London during the winter of 1910–11,[53] preceded the artist's three portraits of his art dealers Ambroise Vollard (Fig. 9), Wilhelm Uhde (Fig. 10), and

[51] Susan Sidlauskas, introduction to *Cézanne's Other: The Portraits of Hortense* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 8; 17.
[52] Ibid., 3.
[53] Penrose, "Picasso's Portrait of Kahnweiler," 126.

Kahnweiler, which were all made in a more overtly Cubist style, as evinced by their fragmented compositions.

In *Vollard*, *Uhde*, and *Kahnweiler*, the structural integrity of the subject's body is noticeably dismantled. While *Sagot* employs areas of localized colour and tonal variation to emphasize the volume of distinct masses in space, the overlapping geometric planes which make up *Vollard, Uhde,* and *Kahnweiler* obscure the spatial relationships between the subject and the environment in which he is situated. In *Uhde*, for example, a pair of parallel planes directly above the triangle resting atop the subject's left eye extend beyond the outline that roughly delineates his head. The two planes, joined together by a line that intercepts the triangle perpendicularly and extends out toward the picture plane's top-right corner, visually connect the pictorial space of the subject's head to that of his surroundings. By obscuring the boundary between the sitter's body and the environment in which he is depicted, the structural integrity of the figure is significantly disassembled. As Garb argues, Picasso's Cubist figures break down the sitter's body and, in so doing, can render it either a generic and anonymous form or a wholly unrecognizable assemblage of intersecting geometric planes.[54] Such stylistic features, she notes, sought to make sensible the iterative and fragmented experience of being and becoming in the world at this historical moment, and so posed substantial implications for both figuration and the notion of a "unified self" implied in the genre's more mimetic conventions.[55]

PICASSO'S *KAHNWEILER*

[54] Garb, *The Painted Face,* 206.
[55] For Garb – like Pointon – stylistic change is linked to historical change; the techniques employed by artists working with the genre are necessarily informed by both the social function of the portrait and the ways in which identity is understood and expressed. Ibid., 189; 206.

While Picasso's approach to portraiture largely eschewed pictorial mimesis in favour of abstraction, the artist nonetheless embraced some of portraiture's previous conventions in order to stage his aesthetic interventions. In his portrait of Kahnweiler, Picasso did not provide a "photographically realistic" representation of his close friend and art dealer. Instead, the subject is constructed through an amalgamation of angular lines and shapes. That said, the portrait still includes some distinctive attributes which help to permit the positive identification of the sitter – the representational components of the image are not wholly abandoned but, rather, are reduced to a few highly stylized visual cues.[56] Here, certain distinguishing physical features, such as Kahnweiler's eyes, nose, and mouth, as well as the pose of the sitter, are alluded to through a simplified lexicon of geometric forms. As Edward F. Fry observes, the representation of organic forms by straight lines and angular shapes is one of the most distinctive characteristics of Cubist works: "straight lines were substituted for the curved contours of a still-life object or of a human face or body; and organic volumes were replaced by a new set of quasi-geometric volumes…"[57] These geometric shapes do not render completely unintelligible the organic forms from which they are derived but, rather, may allude to them through a sufficient degree of "perceived resemblance."[58]

Given that the features which make up Picasso's depiction of Kahnweiler are largely disconnected from their palpable material counterparts, it is pertinent to address the physical characteristics of the sitter that the portrait does retain. Although much of Kahnweiler's appearance is abstracted through Picasso's Cubist technique, there remain a few recognizable

[56] The majority of Cubist images from the Analytical period, notes William Rubin, still developed out of the visual impressions of the depicted subject or object. See Rubin, *Picasso in the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1972), 84.
[57] Edward F. Fry, "Picasso, Cubism, and Reflexivity," *Art Journal* 47, no. 4 (1988): 298.
[58] See Karmel, *Picasso and the Invention of Cubism,* 124–146.

traces of his eyes, long straight nose, small mouth, neatly combed hair, and demurely held hands. Noticeably, the subject's face and hands are rendered in a pale flesh-toned colour that serves to both detach the visible aspects of his body from the picture plane's background and produce the effect of light playing across his skin.[59] The translucent, interpenetrating cubes that make up Kahnweiler's head draw attention to the distinguishing characteristics and, at the same time, demarcate a particular section of pictorial space to establish a context for their interpretation. As such, the defined edges of the shimmering, overlapping planes act as a frame through which the attributes – in their simplified geometric forms – may become decipherable as Kahnweiler's facial features.

Pierre Daix, a friend and biographer of Picasso, writes that these marginal yet identifiable references to the sitter were later additions to the portrait.[60] Picasso began painting *Kahnweiler* while completing the portraits of Vollard and Uhde.[61] Rubin argues that *Vollard* was largely based on a photograph, while *Kahnwiler* and *Udhe* were painted during the numerous sessions wherein the two subjects sat for the artist.[62] Kahnweiler and Uhde, notes Rubin, were less experienced than Vollard at the time, and so Picasso could make "greater demands of their time

[59] In this way, the composition of *Kahnweiler* also draws upon previous nineteenth-century conventions used to depict male subjects. Pointon argues that Picasso's attention to his subject's face and hands is reminiscent of Ingres's well-known 1832 portrait of M. Bertin, founder of the French Newspaper Journal des Débats. This particular painting, she notes, was among one of France's most famous national portraits. See Pointon, "Kahnweiler's Picasso; Picasso's Kahnweiler," 195.
[60] Pierre Daix, "Portraiture in Picasso's Primitivism and Cubism," in *Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transformation*, eds. Rubin and Baldassari (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1996), 278. TJ Clark observes that Picasso also made later alterations to *Man with a Guitar* (1912). These additions, he argues, serve to establish visual indicators of the guitar's shape and spatial direction. See Clark, "Cubism and Collectivity" in *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 169–175.
[61] Daix, "Portraiture in Picasso's Primitivism and Cubism," 278. Pierre Cabanne writes that, in Picasso's three portraits of his art dealers, the "faces seem to emerge, like 'lifelike' apparitions from the fragmentation of the surrounding space, to which they are integrated by subtle "passages." See Cabanne, *Cubism*, 45.
[62] Rubin, "Reflections on Picasso and Portraiture," in *Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transformation*, eds. Rubin and Baldassari (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1996), 33.

and energy."[63] Indeed, Kahnweiler sat for this particular portrait more than thirty times. Picasso made even more remarkable demands of Stein when he painted her portrait in the spring of 1906 (Fig. 11). Although Stein sat over eighty times for the portrait, Picasso was dissatisfied with the way he had rendered her face and, after returning from his summer trip to Spain, replaced it with a mask-like façade in the style of fifth-century Iberian sculpture.[64]

In the case of *Kahnweiler*, Picasso consulted a photograph of the art dealer (Fig. 12) to decide which of his identifying features would best communicate the unique aspects of his appearance.[65] In a letter to French painter and critic Françoise Gilot, Picasso recounted: "In its original form it looked to me as though it were to go up in smoke. But when I paint smoke, I want you to be able to drive a nail into it. So I added the attributes – a suggestion of eyes, the wave in the hair, an earlobe, the clasped hands – and now you can."[66] Picasso wrote that he included the more representational forms to "sustain his [the viewer's] interest and buoy him up for the difficult parts… By mixing what they know with what they do not know … their mind thrusts forward into the unknown and they begin to recognize what they didn't know before ..."[67] As Natasha Staller sensibly argues, these few visual cues make the less overtly representational elements of the image more intelligible. In *Vollard*, she notes, Picasso's relatively legible rendering of the subject's head allows the oblique lines that run from the bottom of the sitter's face to the bottom-left and bottom-right corners of the picture plane to be read as shoulders.[68] A

[63] Ibid., 34.
[64] Brilliant, *Portraiture,* 149; Robert Lubar, "Unmasking Pablo's Gertrude: Queer Desire and the Subject of Portraiture," *The Art Bulletin* 79, no. 3 (March 1997): 56.
[65] Daix, "Portraiture in Picasso's Primitivism and Cubism," 278.
[66] Françoise Gilot, *Life with Picasso* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 73.
[67] Gilot, *Life with Picasso*, 67. Kahnweiler also insisted that, in the midst of fragmented and repetitive forms, the viewer should be given something immediately sensible to ground his or her interpretation.[67] In 1920, he wrote that Cubist pictures "should always be provided with descriptive titles" so that the viewer could trace that which was depicted. See Cowling, *Picasso: Style and Meaning,* 220.
[68] Natasha Staller, *A Sum of Destructions: Picasso's Cultures and the Creation of Cubism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 221–222.

similar effect is achieved in the Kahnweiler portrait: the dark, inarticulate space that occupies the majority of the image's centre can be read as the subject's suited torso by virtue of its position relative to the geometric structures which more clearly evoke Kahnweiler's face and hands.

Certainly, Picasso recognized that the individuality of the figure dissolved when surrendered to the practice of fragmentation and abstraction. Such a dissolution of the portrayed individual's features is particularly evident in Picasso's 1910 painting *Guitar Player* (Fig. 13). In *Guitar Player*, the figure's form is vaguely delineated: a bifurcated cylinder in the top-centre of the picture plane implies the figure's neck, a rectangle that intercepts it perpendicularly indicates a shoulder, and another bifurcated cylinder running downward from the rectangle suggests an arm. While the general form of the subject's body is somewhat legible, there are no distinguishing characteristics that would allow the viewer to identify the sitter.

The discrepancy between the anonymous figure in *Guitar Player* and the more clearly defined features in *Kahnweiler* is imperative to consider, as it points to the way the social function of the portrait is embedded in its representational tactics. As Pointon argues, "questions of likeness are linked to questions of purpose since the purpose of a portrait generally determines the extent to which likeness is a relevant matter."[69] Kahnweiler's role as an art dealer and gallery owner was instrumental in the development of the private gallery system during the early twentieth century. Further, his significant involvement in the promotion of Picasso's and Braque's Cubist works is undisputed. While adding essential physical attributes makes the painting readable as a portrait of Kahnweiler, the mediation of such features through this particular style also draws a relationship between the art dealer's appearance and his seminal role in the rise of Cubism and Picasso. In other words, the sufficient degree of likeness achieved

[69] Pointon, *Portrayal,* 17.

positions the image within the genre of portraiture and, at the same time, identifies Kahnweiler with Picasso's avant-garde style. Therefore, the painting's style, and Picasso's identity, also help construct Kahnweiler's identity as a progressive art dealer.

Significantly, Picasso's *Kahnweiler* problematizes the more mimetic conventions of much nineteenth-century portraiture by fragmenting, deconstructing, and abstracting the sitter far beyond the point of true-to-life legibility; the portrait does not preserve the art dealer's physical appearance in a manner that is wholly intelligible to the viewer. That said, the artist was also reliant on such conventions in order to disrupt them. Picasso recognized the need to include specific attributes of his sitter in order to represent an identifiable human subject, and so make the work readable as a portrait by early twentieth-century viewers. Although figural representation is largely abandoned, the distinguishing features of the subject that the portrait retains establish and strengthen the connection between the portrait and the sitter. As such, the efficacy of Picasso's stylistic intervention is contingent upon the relationship between the portrait, an identifiable subject, and a viewer – the very relationship which formed the basis of the genre's more mimetic conventions.

It is in this way that Picasso's *Kahnweiler* challenges typical semiotic readings of Cubist modalities. From the early twentieth century onward, art historians and critics, such as Paul Reverdy, Amédée Ozenfant, Pierre Jeanneret, Waldermar George, and Kahnweiler himself, had read Cubism as a closed referential system; they argued that the disparate elements which compose the image only make meaning in relation to one another, not to outside signifiers, conventions, and contexts.[70] For example, in 1917, Reverdy claimed that the representational

[70] The semiotic approach to Cubism – along with its criticisms – will be elaborated further in second section.

efficacy of the Cubist image was solely reliant on abstract elements.[71] In 1920, Ozenfant and Jeanneret argued that "Cubism is painting conceived as related forms which are not determined by any reality external to those related forms."[72] Similarly, in 1921, George stated that Cubism was "an end in itself, a constructing synthesis, an artistic fact, a formal architecture independent of external contingencies, an autonomous language and not a means of representation."[73] Indeed, such accounts successfully address the ways in which Cubist techniques work to construct and communicate meaning through abstraction, as will be clarified further in the second section. However, these early interpretations fail to acknowledge that Picasso's Cubist experiments with portraiture were particularly reliant upon previous representational strategies of the genre. In Picasso's *Kahnweiler*, a certain degree of external contingency is necessary for the viewer to successfully identify the sitter.

THE LITERARY PORTRAIT

Similar challenges to the conventions of portraiture were undertaken by Stein through the form of the literary portrait. The tradition of the literary portrait dates back to the second century, when it began as a rhetorical exercise.[74] As opposed to a biography, which offers the reader information about the subject's life through a chronological narrative format, the literary portrait is typically a piece of short, non-narrative prose.[75] Blanchard Bates notes that examples from Ancient Greece exhibit a tendency toward the classification of individuals in terms of

[71] Patricia Leighten, *Re-ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism, 1897 – 1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 102.
[72] Quoted in Leighten, *Re-ordering the Universe*, 103.
[73] Quoted in Leighten, *Re-ordering the Universe*, 103.
[74] Steiner, *Exact Resemblance*, 3.
[75] Ibid., 3.

generalized "types" which were defined by classes of human traits.[76] During the Middle Ages, literary portraiture evolved beyond mere taxonomic description and, instead, provided a succinct summary of the individual's appearance and disposition.[77] Much like more life-like or realistic visual portraits, literary ones often aimed to communicate the subject's identity by describing external features, inward states, and social status. Throughout the Renaissance, the individual was represented, and thus defined, in part by a list of *topoi*: ontological categories such as race, citizenship, family, education, and profession, thought to capture the essence of the subject.[78] Physical traits, actions, and events functioned as examples of the described individual's character.[79]

In the Victorian period, argues Francis Dickey, the literary portrait was a "vehicle for the traditional Cartesian view of the self as comprising an interior, the soul, and exterior, the body."[80] A subject's character was presented on the basis of appearance through a set of symbolic equivalences (blue eyes indicated innocence, for example).[81] As in the physiognomic theories prevalent in much nineteenth-century French art, an individual's external features were thought to accurately represent his or her inward states and personal character. Modernist literary portraiture, notes Dickey, challenged this simplistic equivalence of inside and outside through stylistic experimentation.[82] What is more, he claims that such experiments were

[76] Blanchard Bates, *Literary Portraiture in the Historical Narrative of the French Renaissance* (New York: GE Stechert & Co., 1945), 3.
[77] Ibid., 4.
[78] Steiner, *Exact Resemblance,* 10.
[79] Ibid., 20; Bates, *Literary Portraiture*, 1–2. See also Christian Wenger, "An Introduction to the Aesthetics of Literary Portraiture," *PMLA* 50, no. 2 (June 1935): 615–16.
[80] Frances Dickey, *The Modern Portrait Poem* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 4.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid., 2.

influenced by post-Impressionist movements in the visual arts, such as Futurism and Cubism, which broke with previous conventions of genre and representation.[83]

The rhetorical strategies of the literary portrait operate in a similar manner to those of more mimetic visual portraiture. In both cases, the portraitist must negotiate between the subject's physical appearance and non-physical attributes in order to offer what would be considered a comprehensive and truthful account of identity. Nonetheless, due to the affordances and limitations of each medium, the portraitist must employ specific techniques to capture the subject's identity. For example, in visual portraiture, a loyal rendering of the sitter's appearance is able to elicit an instantaneous relationship between the portrait and its subject; the faithful reproduction of the sitter's appearance serves to signify the sitter and the act of sitting for the portrait. To compare, the literary portrait cannot reproduce the appearance of the subject with complete visible fidelity. While certain features of the subject may be textually described, the literary portrait cannot offer the reader a "true to life" visual image of the subject's likeness. Furthermore, the physical features of the subject that the portrait may describe cannot be apprehended by the reader in one singular moment. Instead, the image of the described individual is built gradually as the reader follows the temporal trajectory of the literary portrait. Instead of provoking an instantaneous recollection of the subject's visual appearance, the literary portrait must necessarily build the subject from the ground-up.

AN IDENTITY IN WORDS

Wendy Steiner, in her comprehensive study of Stein's literary portraiture, uses Charles Peirce's theory of semiotics to explain that "name is a special case of index, in that is always has

[83] Ibid.

the same referent."[84] Peirce's semiotic theory grounds the sign in three key elements: the *icon*, which looks like the thing that it represents; the *index*, which points to something outside of the representation; and the *symbol*, which is an arbitrary sign that becomes associated with a particular thing by way of cultural conventions.[85] By employing a particular set of words or symbols, the index may prompt an instant connection between the sign and the referent. As noted in Peirce's semiotic theory, the index does not necessarily utilize narrative or context, and so presents the subject as an isolated form in and of itself. This leaves room for subjective interpretation, as one symbol may hold a different set of related symbols and concepts for each individual perceiver. However, the assignment of a potential narrative or intention to the work is processed through the reader's reflection upon the text rather than an embedded feature of the text itself. For example, the name *Picasso* may evoke a different set of conceptual connections for everyone, but primarily functions as a literary metonymy wherein the name *Picasso* stands for the man Picasso and the works produced by Picasso.

As accounts of literary portraiture have demonstrated, the individual was conventionally described through a set of symbolic equivalences which designate who the subject is and what the subject does in the context of his or her surrounding social environment. Not only are such paradigmatic rhetorical strategies situated within socio-historically grounded value contexts, but they effectually work against the accidental and momentary nature of being itself. Steiner critiques this mode of understanding personal identity, arguing that "the presentation of the subject … does not correspond to any actual moment of time in his life …"[86] In Stein's literary

[84] Steiner, *Exact Resemblance*, 6.
[85] See also Karmel, *Picasso and the Invention of Cubism,* 109.
[86] Steiner, *Exact Resemblance*, 11.

portraits, she claims, the writer aimed to address this essential problem embedded within the history of the genre by rejecting visual description and symbolic equivalences.

For Stein, what was considered an authentic representation of a subject's identity could not be captured by way of a bundle of signifiers or *topoi*, serving to situate the subject within a conceptual cultural schema, but rather was realized through active iterations of the self, defamiliarized from external reference points.[87] As Steiner, Lisa Ruddick, and Steven Meyer have argued, Stein's approach to literary portraiture was informed by the process philosophy of American philosopher and psychologist William James, who taught Stein at Radcliffe University before she moved to Paris.[88] James presented two dominant models of epistemology: *knowledge about*, attained by way of understanding a given subject or object in relation to surrounding cultural and ideological frameworks, and *acquaintance*, attained through a limitation to bare impression.[89] As notions of personal identity are fundamentally linked to epistemology (what we come to know and how we come to know it informs who and how we conceive ourselves to be), James's distinction between *knowledge about* and *acquaintance* can be understood as one catalyst for the underlying ideological shift embodied in Stein's literary portraiture, which aimed to test the value of external reference points in rendering a subject present.[90]

The subjects of Stein's literary portraits are individuals she was well acquainted with; she wrote portraits of Picasso, Cézanne, and Matisse.[91] In Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933), a memoir fashioned in the style of an autobiography as if written by her partner

[87] Stein, *Lectures in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1935), 170.
[88] See Steiner, *Exact Resemblance,* 23; Lisa Ruddick, "William James and the Modernism of Gertrude Stein," in *Modernism Reconsidered*, eds. R Kiely and J. Hildebildle (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 47–63; Steven Meyer, "Writing Psychology Over: Gertrude Stein and William James," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 133–163.
[89] Steiner, *Exact Resemblance,* 23.
[90] Antliff and Leighten, *A Cubism Reader*, 52; 82.
[91] For *Cézanne*, see Stein, *Selected Writings*, 329. For *Matisse*, see Stein, *Selected Writings,* 329–333.

Tolkas, Stein recounts that her Paris salon served as a meeting place for many up-and-coming artists during the early twentieth century. Stein and her brother Leo were avid collectors of emerging artists, such as Picasso and Matisse, and played an instrumental role in providing them with substantial incomes and building their reputations.[92] Further, the Steins held many Saturday evening soirées, where the philosophy of James, theories of non-Euclidian geometry, and Henri Bergson's theory of duration were often topics of discussion.[93] Stein's salon was a central node in a burgeoning network of aesthetic experimentation, fueled by the exchange of physical art works, the circulation of contemporary philosophies, and the interaction of individual personalities, such as those she aimed to capture in her literary portraits.

STEIN'S *PICASSO*

Unlike Picasso's *Kahnweiler*, Stein's *Picasso* does not attempt to describe the artist's external features. While the use of gendered pronouns denotes that the subject is male, there are no other literary cues which allude to his physical characteristics. The absence and ambiguity of nouns, of which the primary function is to designate a concrete, referential value, is usurped by the extensive use of verbs: "This one was working and something was coming then, something was coming out of this one then … This one was one having something coming out of this one. This one had been one whom some were following. This one was one whom some were following."[94] Through the elimination of denotative nouns, Stein's *Picasso* isolates the subject

[92] Jonathan Frederick Walz, "Portraiture 'at the Service of the Mind': American Modernism, Representation, and Subjectivity from the Armory Show to the Great Depression," in *This is a Portrait if I Say So: Identity in American Art, 1912 to Today*, Anne Collins Goodyear, Jonathan Frederick Walz, Kathleen Merrill Campagnolo et al. (Brunswick: Bowdoin College Museum of Art in association with Yale University Press; New Haven and London, 2016), 124.
[93] Antliff and Leighten have noted that Picasso and Braque were also exposed to James's philosophy through Stein. See *A Cubism Reader*, 52; 82.
[94] Stein, *Selected Writings*, 334. I will discuss the importance of Stein's verb tenses further in the third section.

from the customarily descriptive methods of the literary portrait; he is simply "this one." The reader is not offered *knowledge about* Picasso's appearance, biography, nor his professional or social environment. Instead, we gradually become *acquainted* with the subject through Stein's repetitive, simplified accounts of his actions – "working" and "having something coming out of him" – and the results of those actions – that "some were following" him.

Stein's *Picasso*, as well as her literary portraits more generally, eschew chronological narrative in favour of repetition. As Randa Dubnick argues, Stein's rejection of traditional narrative techniques can be traced back to her first publication, *Three Lives*, dated to 1905–6.[95] While *Three Lives* does loosely employ some narrative elements, such as the sequential ordering of events, Dubnick states that the absence of "rising and falling action" exemplifies the author's initial challenge to traditional plot-based prose. The three stories which make up the publication, "The Good Anna," "Melanctha," and "The Gentle Lena," are each "given equal weight," and so defy the notion of narrative climax. Further, Dubnick argues that Stein rejected the conventional prose trajectory (beginning – middle – end) and, instead, aimed to capture and re-capture the present.[96] This eventually led to Stein's elimination of narrative from her portraits. This is evident in *Picasso* when she writes "This one was one who was working. This one was one being one having something being coming out of him. This one was one being one having something being coming out of him. This one was one going on having something come out of him."[97] Here, Stein presents a repetitive series of fragmented sentences instead of chronologically recounting the subject's actions in detail. What is more, Picasso's actions are simplified to such a degree that they are nearly devoid of qualitative content. The reader, notes

[95] Dubnick, *The Structure of Obscurity*, 19.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Stein, *Selected Writings*, 334.

Leonard Folgarait, is not given any information about the way that Picasso works or what his works may be or look like.[98]

In deconstructing the iterative phrases which make up the text, one can discern that the most frequently recurring action verbs and phrases are "working" and "having something coming out of him." By way of their habitual repetition, Stein's representation of Picasso suggests that such actions were the primary indicators of his identity and character – they show the reader Stein's perception of what the subject spent the majority of his time doing. Such a conception of Picasso as a man who was consistently working is crystallized in the portrait's last stanza, where Stein writes "This one *always* had been working. This one was *always* having something that was coming out of this one …"[99] While the majority of the portrait builds the image of Picasso as a "working" man through non-chronological repetition, Stein's use of the modifying adverb *always* in the final stanza suggests that the repeated phrases are fragments of a homogenous, temporally-extended whole.

However, Stein's emphasis on Picasso's "working" is then seemingly contradicted by the portrait's final line: "He was not ever completely working."[100] This ostensible inconsistency can be resolved through a reflection upon Stein's nuanced pairing of verbs throughout the poem. Most noticeably, she parallels the phrase "having something coming out of him" with the verb "living" and the past and present participles of "being." In the third stanza, Stein writes that Picasso "was one who *had been* all his *living had been* one *having something coming out of him*." What is more, in the penultimate stanza, she states "This one was one *being* one *having something being coming out of him*." Here, Stein suggests an equivalence amongst Picasso's

[98] Leonard Folgarait, "Gertrude Stein," in *Painting 1909: Pablo Picasso, Gertrude Stein, Henri Bergson, Comics, Albert Einstein, and Anarchy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 71.
[99] Stein, *Selected Writings,* 335.
[100] Ibid.

working and his existence. In this way, Stein's *Picasso* challenges the customary indexical relationship evoked by the artist's proper name; Stein's *Picasso* does not stand for the man Picasso and the works produced by Picasso. Instead, her literary portrait attempts to unify the act of being with the act of working, and so conflate the man Picasso with the (ambiguously described) something that was "coming out of him." Many of Picasso's acquaintances, notes Steiner, attested that Stein's portrait accurately depicted the artist, who was constantly working and expressing meaning through his artwork.[101]

MODERATING RESEMBLANCE

While both Picasso and Stein radically disrupted the conventions of visual and literary portraiture, their experimental portraits nonetheless allude to identifiable subjects. In Picasso's *Kahnweiler*, the artist's inclusion of the subject's facial features, combed hair, and crossed hands draw a relationship between particular pictorial signs and the distinguishing features of the individual sitter. As such, Picasso reproduced some of the physical aspects of Kahnweiler's appearance so as to make the portrait legible as a depiction of the prominent early twentieth-century art dealer. The legibility of this particular work is important to note, as it demonstrates the ways in which the social and professional identities of Kahnweiler and Picasso – as well as their respective roles in the development and rise of Cubism – are fortified through the portrait. In *Kahnweiler*, the subject's appearance is submitted to the aesthetic techniques of the image; Kahnweiler is constructed from, and thus must be read through, the arrangement of intersecting simplified geometric shapes and planes. Picasso's later addition of the more representational

[101] Steiner, *Exact Resemblance*, 75.

features permits the positive identification of the sitter and also provides a relational context by which the more abstract elements, such as the sitter's suit, can be "read."

Stein's *Picasso*, by comparison, captures aspects of the subject's identity through the use of recurrent action verbs. Rather than offering her reader a visual description of Picasso's appearance or a cogent, sequential narrative which outlines his artistic achievements, Stein's literary portrait emphasizes iterative and repetitive behaviours which, through their perpetual habituation, come together to form a coherent subject. Much like Picasso's *Kahnweiler*, Stein's *Picasso* is mediated by her characteristic fragmented, anti-narrative, and repetitive style; *Picasso*, too, is constructed from, and thus must be read through, Stein's particular rhetorical idiom. While Picasso and Stein drew upon some of portraiture's conventions in order to disrupt them (which was typical of much avant-garde practice in the modern era), both artists constructed their subjects by fundamentally re-evaluating the representational capacities of their chosen media. Not only did Picasso's and Stein's experiments with portraiture stage significant stylistic interventions, and so challenge previous representations of the individual, but they also proposed alternative frameworks through which to understand and represent identity.

2. THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE: WHY SEMIOTICS IS NOT ENOUGH

In 1948, Kahnweiler – like the linguist Roman Jakobson – drew a connection between the ostensibly internally-contingent structure of Cubist images and the closed system of language. In particular, he stated that the rejection of mimesis speaks to the arbitrary nature of the sign: "These painters turned away from imitation because they had discovered that the true character of painting and sculpture is that of a *script*. The product of these arts are signs, emblems, for the external world, not mirrors reflecting the external world in a more or less

distorting manner."[102] Kahnweiler proposed that such a movement away from mimetic practices both destabilized the relationship between the pictorial sign and its external referent and completely restructured the system wherein the pictorial sign can obtain and displace signifying value. Liberated from their ties to mimetic likeness, Kahnweiler argued that the pictorial signs that compose the Cubist image became contingent upon the structure of the composition as a whole rather than the external forms which provided their prototypes.[103] In terms of Saussurean semiotics, the meaning-making capacity of any given word is contingent upon its relationship to the other words within the complete form of the sentence. Likewise, the meaning-making capacity of any given line or shape in the image is contingent upon its relationship to the other lines and shapes within the seemingly hermetic structure of the picture frame.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, semiotically-informed interpretations of Picasso's and Braque's Cubist techniques were most notably advanced by art critics and historians Rosalind Krauss and Yve-Alain Bois. As Bois notes, Kahnweiler did not publish his defense of Cubism until the outbreak of World War I.[104] During his period of exile from 1915-1920, the critic became familiar with several strands of neo-Kantian philosophy and discovered the German aesthetic tradition after Kant. Bois argues that it was by acquainting himself with these theoretical and aesthetic frameworks (which were not circulating in France at the time) that

[102] Quoted in Yve-Alain Bois, "Kahnweiler's Lesson," 40.
[103] The dissociation of the index from its prototype was also taken up in mid twentieth-century publications by American art critics Alfred H. Barr Jr. and Clement Greenberg. In 1936, Barr's accompanying catalogue to the *Cubism and Abstract Art* exhibition, held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, examined modern art in terms of what he argued was its *technical radicalism*; he claimed that the progressive abandonment of efforts to imitate natural appearance through fidelity to physical form disentangled the informational function of the visual sign in favour of the potential for colour, shape, and line to articulate meaning in and of themselves. Similarly, in 1961, Greenberg claimed that the pictorial sign arrives at a state of pure self-reflexivity through progressive abstraction, which renders it empty of any external reference point. He saw Cubism as a step toward "pure abstraction." See Frascina, "Realism and Ideology," 100; Greenberg, "Modernist Painting,' *Forum Lectures* (Washington, DC: Voice of America, 1960) *Arts Yearbook* 4 (1961), 2.
[104] Bois, "Kahnweiler's Lesson," 33.

Kahnweiler began to engage with formalist criticism and became the first critic to offer an "intelligent account" of Cubism.[105] Although, as Bois notes, several misjudgments can be found in the critic's approach, it is "more important that Kahnweiler had a theory, unlike his French colleagues."[106]

Bois employs Kahnweiler's metaphor of *painting as writing* as well as the semiological models of interpretation propounded by structural linguistics to delineate the four following lessons which he argues were realized by Picasso's experiments with seemingly abstract forms: 1) the sign is arbitrary/nonsubstantial; 2) the sign is constituted by way of differences and oppositions relative to the other signs inside the system it belongs to; 3) the sign is wholly contextual and holds no meaning if isolated; 4) any given sign system has particular limits – a set of loose guidelines must be adhered to in order for the sign to be read.[107] Kahnweiler claimed that Picasso derived the principle of semiological arbitrariness and the nonsubstantial character of the sign from his engagement with African sculpture. He argued that the influence of African sculpture on the works produced by Picasso during his "Negro" period (1906–1909) was purely morphological; the artist adopted the *appearances* of African models to deform anatomical proportions.[108] The "true [structural] influence" of African art in Picasso's work, Kahnweiler claimed, began in 1912 following the artist's discovery of the Grebo mask (Fig. 14).[109] As Bois argues, Picasso saw that the two cylinders which project forward on each side of the rectangular prism running down the centre of the mask signified eyes without bearing any particular

[105] Ibid., 34–35.
[106] Ibid., 36.
[107]Yve-Alain Bois, "The Semiology of Cubism," in *Picasso and Braque: A Symposium*, Rubin, Cottington, Fry et al. (New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1992), 173–74.
[108] This is evident in the mask-like façade which figures in Picasso's 1906 portrait of Stein, for example. See Bois, "Kahnweiler's Lesson," 38–39.
[109] Ibid., 40.

resemblance to what eyes looks like.[110] From a semiotic standpoint, the cylinders are "read" as eyes because of their position relative to the mask's other constituent elements.[111] Such an interpretation posits that the given sign system is completely hermetic; disparate elements need only one another to be made legible.

DECONSTRUCTING PICASSO'S *KAHNWEILER* FROM A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE

A similar reading can be applied to Picasso's *Kahnweiler*. The repetition and organization of the angular lines and shapes that characterize the visual rhythm of the composition allow for the pictorial signs to attain signifying value in relation to one another. For example, the elongated, vertical quadrilateral can only signify the sitter's nose by virtue of its relation to the two inverted trapezoids which signify the sitter's eyes. Similarly, the two inverted trapezoids can only signify the sitter's eyes by virtue of their relation to the elongated, vertical quadrilateral which signifies the sitter's nose. As Krauss claims, these visual signs embody "no natural relation to a referent, no real-world equivalent that give [them] a meaning…"[112] Through a semiotic lens, the capacity for any given line or shape to evoke any feature of Kahnweiler's face is contingent upon its relation to the other lines and shapes within the hermetic structure of the pictorial frame. The pursuit to discover the real-world person or object behind the Cubist image, Krauss asserts, reduces the question of meaning to a quest for "positive identification" and fails to acknowledge the internally contingent process of signification through which the

[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid. See also Karmel, *Picasso and the Invention of Cubism*, 100.
[112] Rosalind Krauss, *The Picasso Papers* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), 28.

fragmented parts of a Cubist painting or collage attain and displace signifying value in relation to one another.[113]

From the perspective of semiotics, it is because the abstracted sign is presumably devoid of any external reference point that colour, shape, and line come to signify themselves. For instance, rather than the set of two inverted trapezoids representing Kahnweiler's eyes, which they very well may within the context of the portrait as a whole, they are first and foremost a set of two inverted trapezoids in their own right. To put it differently, the visual sign, in this case the inverted trapezoid, comes to signify itself and can only obtain any additional meaning by way of its relationship to other signs within the seemingly hermetic structure of the portrait. This treatment of the painting as a complex, isolated form allows for visual objects to obtain and displace symbolic value exclusively in relation to one another within the closed framework of the pictorial frame.

MOVING BEYOND SEMIOTICS

While the semiotic interpretations offered by Bois and Krauss illuminate how the structural elements of the image work together to construct a legible whole, such analyses should not be accepted as conclusive "solutions" to Cubism's rather enigmatic (non-)representational strategies. Ultimately, Bois's and Krauss's adherence to rather strict, semiotically-informed interpretative frameworks are predicated on the assumption that Cubist images abandon resemblance entirely, and therefore cannot be "read" outside of the ostensibly internally-contingent structure of the image. Jack Flam critiques this underlying assumption, arguing that "elements of resemblance almost always determine the shape and placement of forms in Cubist

[113] Rosalind Krauss, "In the Name of Picasso," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Myths,* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), 28–30.

works."[114] Even the seemingly arbitrary protruding cylinders of the Grebo mask, Flam claims, allude to something about how eyes look; notably, that they are spherical.[115] As has been explicated, Picasso's *Kahnweiler* also challenges the notion that the visual relationship between the sign and the referent is wholly discarded; the portrait permits the positive identification of the sitter because it bears a sufficient resemblance to him. What is more, the portrait itself signifies that Kahnweiler was an individual willing to commission a likeness of himself fashioned in this particular avant-garde style.

Although, as Flam notes, the notion that the image deploys a particular syntax can prove useful when discussing specific structural features and the way that they interact with one another, it cannot account for the complex manner by which the image combines abstract and representational elements.[116] Instead, he argues that the disparate components that come together to form the image should be read as "multivalent forms" that exhibit a tension between varying degrees of fidelity to physical resemblance.[117] The inverted trapezoids in *Kahnweiler*, for example, can function as both polygons and eyes simultaneously.

Most semiotic interpretations scale down the image's signifying lexicon to a sparse geometric skeleton, and so presuppose a static visual vocabulary from which to derive meaning. David Cottington proposes that Peircean semiotics may offer a more flexible alternative for

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[114] Jack Flam, "The Empire of the Sign," *Notes in the History of Art* 31/32, no. 4/1 (Summer 2012/Fall 2012), 14.
[115] Ibid, 17. Karmel offers a similar critique of Krauss's Saussurean approach. Krauss, in her 1985 essay "In the Name of Picasso," argues that Cubism is fundamentally linguistic because it reflects the Saussurean concept that "in language there are only differences … without positive terms." She uses the example of a stop light to demonstrate this point, stating that the colour red only means *stop* relative to the colour green, which means *go*. Karmel, like Flam, claims that there are positive terms connecting the sign to that which it denotes. The colour red, for example, is associated with blood (because it *looks like* blood) and so urges us to act with caution. See Krauss, "In the Name of Picasso," 24 – 30; Karmel, *Picasso and the Invention of Cubism*, 103.
[116] Flam, "The Empire of the Sign," 16.
[117] Ibid., 16–17. Flam also sensibly notes a logical inconsistency in the Saussurean semiotic approach and the metaphorical parallelism of linguistic syntax and pictorial composition more generally: each unit in a sentence is a "syntactical constituent" that holds content while, in Cubist images, a significant amount of the picture space is "left over" without specific signifieds or content.

understanding the codification of visual signs that typify much of Picasso's Cubist work. A semiotic analysis that employs the Saussurean paradigm necessitates the division of the image into "discrete units of meaning."[118] However, as Cottington maintains, the *iconic* and *symbolic* qualities of signs cannot operate independently but, rather, interact with one another. In other words, the capacity for a thing's appearance to convey something other than how the thing appears is reliant upon the relationship between the thing's appearance and the established cultural practices that endow the thing (and, by consequence, its appearance) with qualitative value. In *Kahnweiler*, the figure's suit and combed hair indicate that he was a refined and professional gentleman and the watch-chain suggests that he was punctual. Furthermore, the pair of wooden statues announce his involvement with avant-garde art and the medicine bottles signal at least a moderate engagement with or knowledge of modern science.

Aside from being exceedingly prescriptive, the semiotically-informed approaches of Bois and Krauss have been criticized for neglecting to consider the complex cultural contexts out of which their case studies emerged. Perhaps most influential of such criticisms are those written by art historian Patricia Leighten in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[119] Leighten writes that "postwar artists and critics rewrote the history of the prewar Cubist movement and established an obfuscatory model of Cubism whose influence we still feel today."[120] She claims that in interviews from the 1920s onward, Picasso distorted the complex prewar project of Cubism, which she argues was driven by philosophical, scientific, and aesthetic motivations to understand and represent the nature of reality, such as those advanced by philosophers James, Bergson,

[118] David Cottington, *Cubism and its Histories* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 209.
[119] See Patricia Leighten, "Revising Cubism," *Art Journal* 47, no. 4 (1988): 269–276; "Cubist Anachronisms: Ahistoricity, Cyroptoformalism, and Business-as-usual in New York," *Oxford Art Journal* 17, no .2 (1994): 91–102.
[120] Leighten, "Revising Cubism," 271.

Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche, and mathematician Maurice Princet. [121] Instead, Leighten maintains, Picasso reduced the style to a game of line, colour, and form.[122] Because Kahnweiler and Waldemar George discussed Cubism on the basis of stylistic terms alone, she notes, the underlying ideological motivations that fueled Cubist practices disappeared from critical discourse after World War I.[123] Further, Leighten asserts that the subsequent interpretations of Cubism offered by art critics and historians associated with formalism, such as Douglas Cooper, John Golding, and Edward Fry, as well as the later semiotic readings advanced by Bois and Krauss, grow out of Kahnweiler's 1920 publication.[124]

Moreover, Leighten argues that such semiotically-informed interpretations ignore the socio-historical bases of the very theories which they apply to interpret their case studies.[125] The approaches of Bois and Krauss, she contends, use theory as a "value-free system whose premises go unquestioned."[126] Looking to the work of literary theorist Jonathan Culler, she notes that the theory of semiology emerged from Saussure's interest in discovering a system by which to analyze features of social behaviour: "… the self or subject," writes Culler, "comes to appear more and more as a construct, the result of systems of conventions. When one speaks, one artfully 'complies with language' … Even the idea of personal identity emerges through the discourse of a culture."[127] The concept of internal contingency facilitated through a Saussurean approach, although somewhat useful, is not enough. The meaning of the word or visual sign is

[121] Ibid., 270. See also Antliff and Leighten, *A Cubism Reader*, 2; 8.
[122] Leighten, "Revising Cubism," 270.
[123] Drawing on the work of Kenneth Silver, Leighten asserts that such formalist views had emerged in order to combat the chaotic realities of postwar France. Greenberg, whose work is predicated on the historical materialist perspective which underscores Marxist theories, revived formalism during and after World War II, claiming that modern art progressed toward a state of pure form. See Leighten, "Revising Cubism," 272–73.
[124] Antliff and Leighten, *A Cubism Reader*, 2.
[125] Leighten, "Cubist Anachronisms," 95.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid, 93. See also Jonathan Culler, *Ferdinand de Saussure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 15–16.

contingent upon both its relationship within the sentence or image as a whole *and* the surrounding context in which the word is spoken or the image is perceived. As scholars such as Leighten and Culler have argued, there is a larger system in which signs make meaning, but that system is always in a constant state of becoming and only retains any degree of coherence through our repeated engagement with its conventions.[128]

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Language is an epistemological and representational tool designed by humans to be used by humans. Language allows us to divide our fluid, incoherent environment into discrete parts and to make those parts sensible through an agreed-upon classificatory framework. That said, any given representational framework is neither concrete nor stable; its rules are established through its usage and its conventions are reinforced (or destabilized) through its repetition (or lack thereof).[129] Ludwig Wittgenstein's notion of *family resemblance* illuminates how and why the communicative capacity of the sign cannot be read in isolation from the conditions of its circulation. For Wittgenstein, the meaning of any given word is always contingent; a word "means *in certain contexts*."[130] Although a given word will offer different meanings in different circumstances, it is the sufficient similarity amongst the ways in which the word is used – the *family resemblance* amongst disparate speech acts involving the word – that produces enough coherence for the word to acquire and displace signifying value within a larger system of language.

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[128] See also Sonia Sedivy, *Beauty and the End of Art: Wittgenstein, Plurality and Perception* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 97.
[129] Ibid., 97; 119.
[130] See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Preliminary Studies for the "Philosophical Investigations"* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), 1–7.

Wittgenstein's notion of *family resemblance* highlights the plasticity of both language and of sign systems more generally. The plasticity of language was certainly appreciated by Stein, who stated that "… words have the liveliness of constantly being chosen. That is what makes that the literature that it is."[131] Language, as Stein here highlighted, is not a fixed hermetic system but, rather, a malleable technique that is kept alive through its continued usage. What is more, Stein also recognized the contextual contingency of language. As she noted, "… the way you write has everything to do with where you are insofar as you are anywhere, and of course and inevitably you are somewhere."[132] Like the representational strategies that typify much visual portraiture, the literary techniques deployed by writers in their descriptions of individual subjects are grounded in socio-historically contingent conventions and they ways in which those conventions engage with notions of identity.

TRANSFORMING "THIS ONE" INTO STEIN'S PICASSO

Stein's literary portrait of Picasso subverts the traditional chronology of narrative, and so disrupts the conventional temporal trajectory of written language. Lisa Ruddick argues that Stein's stylistic idiom, characterized by its fragmented and repetitive rhythm, brings to the fore the "very quality of language as familial – as a matter of likeness or loose kinship."[133] In Stein's *Picasso*, she refuses to ground the portrait's content in denotative nouns, and thus problematizes the notion that there is a fixed meaning toward which any given word may point. For example, the subject is continuously described as "having *something* coming out of him," but the reader is

[131] Stein, *Lectures in America*, 25.
[132] Ibid., 28.
[133] For Stein, Ruddick claims, the effort to ascribe concrete meanings to words is a deceptive and repressive enterprise rooted in patriarchal thinking. As she notes, Stein saw "patriarchy as dependent on a series of rigid distinctions, classifications that form a fixed system as opposed to [a] mobile 'system to pointing'…" See Lisa Ruddick, *Reading Gertrude Stein: Body, Text, Gnosis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 197–98.

never told what that *something* is; it may be a physical artwork, the subject's creative energy, or a thing entirely unrelated to Picasso's artistic practice – Stein's use of the ambiguous word *something* makes all such readings possible.

To this end, Stein sought to make clear the distinction between the enterprise of definition and the use of language as a communicative tool. In her 1931 publication *How to Write,* Stein states: "There is a very great difference between a vocabulary and a dictionary…"[134] As Deborah Mix argues, definition stresses separation and particularity whereas vocabularies are more broad and subtle, permitting both collective and individual engagement with meaning-making. While the dictionary "is the same for each of us," notes Mix, the ways in which the words that make up the seemingly stable lexicon are used establish the more nuanced groups of associations and neologisms that endow particular words with qualitative meaning.[135] In other words, it is the vocabularies generated by people communicating in the world that allow words to make meaning *to and for us*. By destabilizing the relationship between a given word and its assumed stable referent, Stein instead built a flexible system of associations – or familial relations – through which meaning may be constructed.

When Stein renders individual characters, Ruddick argues, the writer's use of repetition "homogenizes everything it touches" so that each part becomes "equal and interchangeable."[136] In Stein's *Picasso*, the subject is addressed as "this one" rather than by his individual name. Much like the manner by which Cubist techniques translate complex organic forms into a more streamlined lexicon of geometric shapes, Stein's literary portrait of Picasso simplifies the subject

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[134] Quoted in Deborah Mix, *A Vocabulary of Thinking: Gertrude Stein and Contemporary North American Women's Innovative Writing* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2007), 1.
[135] Mix, *A Vocabulary of Thinking,* 2.
[136] Ruddick, *Reading Gertrude Stein*, 84. Stein stated that this aspect of her literary technique was influenced in part by Cézanne: she wrote that the artist "conceived the idea that in composition on thing was as important as another thing. Each part is as important as the whole, and that impressed me enormously." Quoted in Ruddick, "William James and the Modernism of Gertrude Stein," 47–63.

to the rudimentary concept of the single unit. Although the word "one" does indicate that the subject to be apprehended is being presented as a singular, unified whole, the conventional one-to-one relationship assumed between the proper noun and the individual in the world to whom it refers is altogether rejected. Instead, Stein's *Picasso* builds up the subject by way of repetition; "this one" is continually modified in relation to itself rather than any external reference point.

Stein conceived that an individual's identity was enacted through a series of self-similar iterations. By isolating the subject from external reference points, the hermetic, self-referential structure of Stein's literary portrait reflects her conceptualization of identity as a hermetic, self-referential transaction between the individual and the world. Writing on the subject of identity and portraiture, Stein explicitly called into question the tendency to ground an individual's identity in relational value models: "If they are themselves inside them what are they and what has it to do with what they do… Must they be in relation with any one or any thing in order to be one of whom one can make a portrait."[137] Certainly, Stein's stylistic experiments worked to subvert the notion of language as a stable lexicon wherein any given individual unit may only make meaning in relation to one another. By way of a similar motivation, her literary portraits served to undermine the assumption that a subject's identity may be apprehended simply by positioning him or her in relation to other individuals and by interpreting that position through a pre-established set of denotative signs.

As in Wittgenstein's concept of *family resemblance*, it is through repetition that "this one" and the verbs used ascribe continuous action in relation to him come together to form a coherent image of the presented subject. "This one" refers to Picasso not because the words "this one" *mean* Pablo Picasso but because the words "this one" have been used enough times

[137] Stein, "Portraits and Repetition," 171–72.

throughout the piece for them to retain some semblance of a coherent meaning.[138] As Mix has pointed out, even the assumed fixity of the proper name evades a concrete definition without repetition.[139] In her analysis of Stein's "Finally George A Vocabulary of Thinking," published in 1931, Mix argues that Stein's linguistic experiments challenged the concept of definition as a whole by uprooting the proper noun from its ostensibly secure referent. "Finally George," Mix notes, begins by referring to several Georges, such as George Lynes George and Georges Braque, and so emphasizes that the proper name George – given without a surname – is open to multiple significations.[140] Much like the abstract geometric shapes which make up Picasso's *Kahnweiler*, the name George does not instantaneously point to a specific individual but, rather, simply points to the name George.

In Stein's *Picasso*, the words "this one" function in much a similar way; the words are self-referential until a sufficient context for their interpretation is established through repetition. Within the framework of Stein's literary portrait, then, the ability for the linguistic sign to denote a particular meaning is wholly contingent upon the relationships between separate iterations of the same word or set of words within the work as a whole. As philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler perceptively claims, "all signification takes place within the orbit of the compulsion to repeat; 'agency', then, is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition."[141] By diverging from previous conventions of the genre, Stein presented a variation of the literary portrait through which to articulate her own stylistic interests. Almost ironically, it is precisely through the use of repetition that Stein destabilized the presumed referential fixity of

[138] The title of the work, too, helps to establish the connection between the words "this one" and "Picasso."
[139] Mix, *A Vocabulary of Thinking*, 1.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Quoted in Mix, *A Vocabulary of Thinking*, 28.

nouns implied in conventional prose and, in so doing, generated an alternative framework through which to construct and derive meaning.

RE-ORGANIZING REPRESENTATION

With this in mind, it is imperative to distinguish techniques of writing from the practice of using language more generally. As philosopher Alva Noë argues, writing is a method of "representing language" and "normalizing speech."[142] Writing does not represent sound. For example, Noë states that one cannot "write" the actual creak of a door.[143] Instead, a system of writing sets up a linguistic ontology by arranging words and phrases in a particular way that, in turn, informs our understanding of language and the ways that we use it. Noë's argument grows out of a broader framework that he constructs to explore the functional relationships between epistemological models and the representational strategies which make them sensible. As he outlines, *first-order activities*, such as seeing or talking, organize how we interact with our environment.[144] These activities embody a relationship between the world as it is experienced and the way that our experiences are conceptualized. For example, Noë asserts that seeing is a "temporally extended, dynamic exchange with the world around us" that is fundamentally directed by our perceptions, movements, and expectations.[145] Although the appearance of any given thing will change as we move around it – an object will appear to grow larger as we come nearer to it, for example – our ordinary modes of conceptualizing what we see cultivates a sense

[142] Alva Noë, *Strange Tools: Art and Human Nature* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2015), 32; 34.
[143] Ibid., 34.
[144] Ibid., 5; 31.
[145] Ibid., 9.

of "perceptual constancy"; we can understand that an object is not changing in size even though our perception of it may seem to indicate otherwise.[146]

Further, Noë argues that *second-order practices*, such as art-making and writing, represent our ordinary modes of conceptual organization and, in so doing, re-organize the very activities from which they emerge.[147] Second-order practices, he maintains, are efforts to understand how the activity shapes our understanding of the world that are undertaken from within the activity itself: "… think of the relation of the arts and philosophy (second-order practices) to their raw material (first-order activities) as analogous to the relation of writing to speech. Writing is invented by speakers to model how they speak, or to represent language to themselves. The availability of this very image of language serves to change and recognize the way we speak in the first place."[148]

As Noë's analysis highlights, visual art and literature are meaning-making practices that generate new frameworks through which our ordinary systems of conceptual organization can be reconsidered. Picasso's *Kahnweiler* exhibits a tension between abstract and representational elements. Insofar as the more abstract forms test the ability of the portrait to render its subject present without mimetic imagery, the more representational forms test the capacity for an internally-contingent referential system to evoke a referent that exists outside of that system. Stein's *Picasso*, in comparison, decentralizes the presumed fixity of nouns to explore how more general words and terms – such as "something" and "this one" – can evoke multiple referents or a singular, more particular one. As such, Stein's literary portrait demonstrates how linguistic meaning is produced through a contextually-contingent constellation of associations.

[146] Ibid. This will be explored at length in the discussion on phenomenology which follows.
[147] Ibid., 31.
[148] Ibid., 36.

3. SUBJECTIVITY, SPACE, AND EXPERIENCE: DIVERGING FROM ONE-POINT PERSPECTIVE

While theories of semiotics help to address how the lines and shapes that make up Picasso's *Kahnweiler* obtain and displace signifying value, the technical processes of Cubist painting more generally embody an epistemological shift concerning how the relationship between the perceiver and the subject or object of study was conceptualized. A dissatisfaction with the potential of one-point perspective is, indeed, reflected in the processes by which early twentieth-century Cubist artists, such as Picasso, Braque, Jean Metzinger, and Juan Gris, created their works. In particular, such artists moved around an object or subject instead of aiming to document it from a fixed point of view. The limitations of localized perception were taken up in French painter, writer, and theorist Metzinger's 1911 article entitled "Cubism and Tradition," which addresses the representational restrictions that one-point perspective can impose upon an artist. Metzinger, who worked alongside Picasso during the early twentieth century, stated that Cubist forms capture the motion of the artist as he moves around his object or subject of study:

> Already, they have uprooted the prejudice that directed the painter to stand motionless, at a determined distance from the object, and to capture on the canvas only the retina's photograph of it … They have allowed themselves to move around the object to give a concrete representation of several aspects of it in succession, under the control of the intelligence. The picture used to occupy space, now it reigns in time as well.[149]

Rather than standing stationary in front of an object or subject and observing it from a fixed perspective, the process of motion successively repositioned the point of view which granted the artist visual access to that which was perceptible. The object or subject, then, was perceived from several angles through time yet depicted on a two-dimensional picture plane.

[149] Jean Metzinger, "Cubism and Tradition," *Paris Journal* (18 August 1911), 5. Translation in Antliff and Leighten, *A Cubism Reader,* 123.

In *Kahnweiler*, the repetition of lines and shapes suggest that Picasso had captured his subject from several perspectives. For example, as Tony Robbin argues, the translucent overlapping cubes which make up the figure's head "cannot be brought together. Multiple cubes make up the head rather than a single cube defining it."[150] The figure's face, Robbin observes, is rotated at a forty-five-degree angle relative to the cube which marks out the general area of his head.[151] Here, Picasso refuses to offer the viewer a clear point of view through which to orient his or her reading of the attributes contained within the larger framework of intersecting planes meant to represent the figure's head. The artist's rendering of Kahnweiler's mouth and hands also imply that he documented his perception of the subject from multiple points of view. The figure's mouth, notes Roland Penrose, is composed of two parallel lines that are attached by an upward-facing curve.[152] Further, three faint vertical lines rest below the figure's crossed hands, suggesting an additional set of hands which subtly echo the shape and positioning of the more clearly delineated ones. By positioning similar arrangements of lines and shapes in relation to one another, Picasso's portrait of Kahnweiler implies that the artist had depicted the sitter from multiple points of view.

PERCEPTION, CONCEPTION, REPRESENTATION

Various writers and art critics, such as Léon Werth and Guillaume Apollinaire, noted that the Cubist approach to space was exemplified by the rendering of multiple viewpoints upon a two-dimensional surface. In May 1910, Werth – who was the first to use to term "cubic" to describe Picasso's 1908–09 Horta landscapes – wrote a review of the artist's exhibition at

[150] Robbin, *Shadows of Reality*, 30.
[151] Ibid., 31.
[152] Penrose, "Picasso's Portrait of Kahnweiler," 130.

Uhde's Notre-Dame des Champs gallery. He stated that "… the forms created by Mr. Picasso are abstract patterns … only they have the power and the right to transport onto the plane of the canvas the sensations and reflections that move about in time."[153] Similarly, in June 1914, Apollinaire argued that Picasso and Braque "endeavoured to represent figures and objects from several angles at the same time."[154] Scholars, such as Robbin, Linda Henderson, and Pepe Karmel, have demonstrated how such efforts to transmute space and time, achieved through the fragmentation of substantive content and the overlapping of planes, were in conversation with contemporary theories of sensory perception, geometry, and temporality.[155]

Picasso's layering of shifting viewpoints, like his geometric deconstruction of the figure, has also been interpreted as derived from Cézanne's perspectival distortions. As Paul Smith argues, Cézanne's pictures display a divergence from one-point perspective and, instead, shift between multiple points of view.[156] Smith claims that the artist anticipated a conception of vision as involving both a conscious "allocentric" experience of the world (one that shows up on the "television screen inside our heads") and an unconscious "egocentric" awareness of the spatial movements necessary for comprehending the objects that exist within it.[157] The distance separating the perceiver from the object is measured through "tactile space" while the distance separating objects from one another is measured through "visual space."[158] Cézanne, Smith

[153] Léon Werth, "Exposition Picasso," *La Phalange* 20 (June 1910), 728–30. Translation in Antliff and Leighten, *A Cubism Reader*, 64–66.
[154] Quoted in Cabanne, *Cubism,* 165.
[155] Linda Henderson and Tony Robbin explore how non-Euclidean geometry and Charles Howard Hinton's concept of the fourth dimension are visualized through Cubist images: See Henderson, *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art* (London, England; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2013); Robbin, *Shadows of Reality*. Pepe Karmel discusses the impact of nineteenth-century French critic and historian Hippolyte Taine, who posited that the illusion of depth arose through the interaction of visual cues and tactile cues: See Karmel, *Picasso and the Invention of Cubism*, 3–12.
[156] See Paul Smith, "Cézanne's 'Primitive' Perspective, or the 'View from Everywhere'," *The Art Bulletin* 95, no. 1 (March 2013), 102.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.

claims, understood these two aspects of vision as "mutually informative." This is demonstrated by his engagement with what French phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty called a "lived perspective": the artist's paintings express how the "experience of objects unfolds for the perceiving subject" through visuomotor perception.[159] Such a perspective involves virtual (rather than literal) movements around and behind the perceived objects, uncovering their meanings relative to an embodied spectator in a more comprehensive way than a purely fixed "allocentric" point of view affords. Picasso, argue Antliff and Leighten, engaged with a similar notion of perception outlined by French mathematician Henri Poincaré in his 1902 publication *Science and Hypothesis*.[160]

So, too, are there connections between Picasso's rendering of space and the theory of phenomenology proposed by German philosopher Edmund Husserl during the first decade of the twentieth century.[161] Phenomenology, generally understood as the philosophical study of experienced reality, posits that our access to reality is exclusively determined by a particular point of view facilitated through our bodies. The human body does not grant the individual access to reality from several vantage points simultaneously. As such, the individual's fixed location at any given moment defines the characteristics of their surrounding world capable of being perceived; the individual observer can never see an object in all of its dimensions in one singular instance, and so is incapable of perceiving all of its qualities from a single point of view.

The limitations of one-point perspective are addressed by Husserl in section 41 of *Ideas*. He stated that, when moving around an object, it is only through the cognitive synthesis of

[159] Ibid., 103.
[160] Antliff and Leighten, *Cubism and Culture*, 9; 68.
[161] The relationship between Husserlian phenomenology and Cubism is drawn by both Randall Slettene and Pau Pedragosa. See Slettene, "New Ways of Seeing the Old: Cubism and Husserlian Phenomenology," *The European Legacy* 2, no. 1 (1997): 104–109; Pedragosa, "Multiple Horizons: Phenomenology, Cubism, Architecture," in *The European Legacy* 19, no. 6 (2014): 747–764.

multiple viewpoints that the sequential *perception* of an object from various angles can be consolidated to produce the *conception* of a singular form.[162] Through this process of cognitive synthesis, the structural integrity of the object is held together by the conscious mind; the object appears as a unified form to the perceiver although she may only observe a fraction of its appearance at any given moment. This emphasis on the process of cognitive synthesis is echoed in French art critic Maurice Raynal's 1912 publication *Concept and Vision*, wherein he argues that it is only through *conception* that the perceiver may bridge the gaps between moments of vision defined by their localized points of view; the object's unity is realized not through perception but, rather, through reflective processes.[163] Moreover, such a position finds its parallels in the work of Kahnweiler himself, who noted in 1920 that the object's form "is in no degree *described* in its continuity; continuity arises only in the creative imagination of the spectator."[164]

In *Kahnweiler*, Picasso's radical divergence from one-point perspective took into account his experience as he moved around his subject, rendering his perceptions present in both space and time. In so doing, Picasso recorded the temporality of the creator interpreting the sitter (who is himself subject to time). Through the repetition of lines and shapes, such as those evident in Picasso's rendering of Kahnweiler's hands and mouth, subtly shifting perspectives on the same content can cohere and allude to the single features which provided their prototypes. In the case of the sitter's hands, this is achieved through visual similarity: the arrangement of lines used to evoke the two sets of hands look sufficiently alike, and so can be ascribed to the same real-world referent: Kahnweiler's hands. The two lines that indicate the figure's mouth, by comparison, are

[162] Slettene, "New Ways of Seeing the Old," 107.
[163] Ibid, 108. Edward F. Fry, *Cubism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 95.
[164] Quoted in Bois, "Kahnweiler's Lesson," 41.

explicitly connected by a curved line within the image. Because these multiple points of view are fragmented and layered on top of one another, as we can see in these two examples, the viewer is forced into a process of cognitive synthesis to turn the repeated lines, shapes, and colours into a coherent 3-dimensional whole. In other words, the viewer must consolidate all of the layers which successively represent multiple viewpoints of Kahnweiler's hands, for instance, in order for them to indicate a single pair of hands.

BECOMING STEIN'S *PICASSO*

Stein's experimentation with literary portraiture can similarly be interpreted as motivated by a desire to capture the spatial and temporal dimensions of experienced reality. As Ulla Haselstein has argued in her analysis of the writer's literary portraits, Stein "used stylized forms of spoken language to account for both the perception and the presentation of individual human beings."[165] This is most apparent in Stein's widespread use of verbs in the past continuous and past perfect continuous tenses. The past continuous tense, which combines the past tense of the verb "to be" with a verb in the present participle (its root + "ing"), expresses continuing actions and/or events that began at some point before now. For example, the phrase "she was reading" expresses that the subject began to read at some point before now and continued to read until some other indefinite point. Similarly, the past perfect continuous tense, which combines "had been" with a verb in the present participle, denotes a continuous action that began in the past. As such, the past continuous and past perfect continuous tenses describe an unfinished or incomplete action.

[165] Haselstein, "Gertrude Stein's Portraits of Matisse and Picasso," 723.

In *Picasso*, Stein writes that the subject – addressed as "this one" – was both "working" and "going on working." Stein's use of the past continuous tense thus expresses that Picasso began working and continued to be working up until and whilst she was in the process of writing his portrait. By carrying over the subject's present actions of the past into her immediate present, Stein captured the process of perceiving her subject's actions over time. Further, through the repetition of such phrases structured in the past continuous tense, Stein documented the moments in which Picasso's actions were perceived by her through time. As Dubnick argues, Stein "presented each moment of perception in isolation because of her belief that all authentic perception exists in the present tense."[166] Like Picasso's *Kahnweiler*, Stein's *Picasso* orders separate moments of perception in relation to one another to form a temporally-extended whole.

However, as Steiner explicates in her analysis of the text, "the [described] activities … are themselves unsituated in relation to time, and the whole activity of the subject, that which defines him, occurs as a set of discrete, non-ordered moments related only by similarities …"[167] In other words, the actions of the subject are not contextualized within a specific location or particular temporal moment(s). Such a stylistic decision can be read in relation to Stein's thoughts on the nature of action through time. In 1931, she stated that "if it were possible that a movement were lively enough it would exist so completely that it would not be necessary to see it moving against anything to know that it is moving. This is what we mean by life and in my way I have tried always may try to make portraits of this thing."[168] Put differently, the notion that we can only know the present is the present because we can conceive that it is not the past nor the future is merely a consequence of a certain way of understanding time and our experiences

[166] Dubnick, *The Structure of Obscurity,* 11.
[167] Steiner, *Exact Resemblance,* 69.
[168] Stein, "Portraits and Repetition," 170.

through time. For Stein, actions – like perceptions – are continuously present. While her literary portrait does imply duration through the use of the past continuous tense, and therefore does not completely abandon the concept of temporal linearity, Stein does not make explicit a sequential ordering of actions or events. In *Picasso*, the repeated words and phrases are not organized chronologically in relation to one another.

Instead, the repetition that organizes how the information is presented, Stein asserted, provided her with a "continuous succession of the statement of what that person was until [she] had not many things but one thing."[169] As Ruddick notes, the degree of "sameness" realized through repetition is achieved by both the abundance of specific action verbs and the participle form (the "ing") in which they end.[170] Given that the participle form disconnects the verbs from a legible temporal trajectory, the sufficient similarities which hold the subject together are continually apprehended and re-apprehended in the present.[171] Ultimately, Stein's literary portrait, much like Picasso's painterly Cubist techniques, negotiates the connection between *perception* and *conception*, and thus similarly calls into question the relationships amongst experience, knowledge, and representation. By presenting several discrete moments of perception, Stein's *Picasso* correspondingly demands that the reader synthesize the repeated linguistic signs throughout the piece in order to construct a unified conception of the subject.

[169] Stein, *Selected Writings,* 328.
[170] Ruddick, *Reading Gertrude Stein,* 85.
[171] Folgarait, Meyer, and Antliff and Leighten all note that the repeated phrases at the outset of Stein's *Picasso* exhibit slight variations from one another: Picasso is described as "charming," "completely charming," and "certainly completely charming." As Folgarait argues, the author's "perspective on the same content shifts slightly from one sentence to the next." See Folgarait, "Gertrude Stein,", 71; Meyer, "Writing Psychology Over," 133–163; Antliff and Leighten, *A Cubism Reader*, 54.

OBSERVING THE MODERN SUBJECT

In *Techniques of the Observer* (1990), Jonathan Crary explores the relationship between nineteenth-century physiological theories of perception and concurrent modes of technologically-mediated perception, such as the *camera obscura*. During the nineteenth century, Crary recounts, physiological models separated the senses from one another and from the interpretive processes of cognition by which sensory information comes to make sense to us.[172] What is more, he argues, advances in the field of photography brought with them the notion that perception can be recorded and calculated by way of technology. As Crary's analysis highlights, the way that we understand our relationship to the world around us – the way that the world "shows up" for us – is mediated by both the conceptual frameworks we use to navigate it and the techniques we use to represent it to ourselves.

Crary traces this over-arching argument back to Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), wherein the eighteenth-century German philosopher wrote that "our representation of things, as they are given, does not conform to these things as they are in themselves, but that these objects as appearances, conform to our mode of representation."[173] Here, Kant illuminates the mutually-informative relationship between perception and representation. Much like Noë, who considers philosophy and art-making epistemologically motivated practices, Kant regarded representation as a necessary way of organizing our experiences in a particular way. Considering that there is no experiential framework outside the first-person experience, constructed theoretical and conceptual frameworks help us to assess and define features of the environment, ostensibly removed from the subject's qualitative

[172] See Jonathan Crary, "Subjective Vision and the Separation of the Senses," in *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990).
[173] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith 1965 (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 24–25. Quoted in Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 69–70.

phenomenological experience. However, as any objective understanding must be defined altogether in relation to the subject, these features are only objective inasmuch as they remain accurate within our agreed-upon conceptual frameworks.

The Cubist experiments of Picasso and Stein radically disrupted the conventions of mimetic portraiture as well as the underlying assumptions implied in more descriptive representational practices by re-imagining the conceptual frameworks through which their subjective experiences may be mediated. Such a disruption can be understood as motivated in part by nineteenth century advances in mechanized perception and insights into the physiology of human sense perception, which brought to the fore the mutually-informative relationships amongst perception, conception, and representation. In her analysis of Stein's portraits, Haselstein claims that nineteenth-century notions of perception and "discontinuous subjectivity" – such as those outlined by Crary – challenged the concept of the "unified self" implicit in mimetic portraiture.[174] As such, the notion of a fragmented self could more comprehensively account for the theories of fragmented perception and subjectivity advanced throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The subject of Stein's *Picasso* is, indeed, fragmented into a series of discrete, non-ordered actions. Further, Stein's literary portrait captures not only the subject but the writer's *perception* of the subject and the way that perception is negotiated through a medium-specific stylistic idiom. The content of the subject's actions is subordinated to Stein's characteristic repetitive clauses and simplified vocabulary. In this way, Haselstein argues, Stein's literary portraits are also self-portraits inasmuch as they refer to the particular character of her writing.[175]

[174] Haselstein, "Gertrude Stein's Portraits of Matisse and Picasso," 729.
[175] Richard Brilliant also argues for the "persistence of the Steinian self" in the author's writing, stating that "ego identity has a stability in Stein." See Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 151.

A comparable argument can be made for Picasso's *Kahnweiler*. The portrait captures the artist's perception of the sitter and the manner by which that perception is mediated through a stylistic idiom particular to the painted image. Moreover, the subject's appearance is submitted to a process of fragmentation and repetition typical of Picasso's work from the Analytical Cubist period. In a similar manner, then, Picasso's *Kahnweiler* is also a self-portrait insofar as it refers to the style of his painting at the time.

As such, Picasso's *Kahnweiler* and Stein's *Picasso* present the portrait as a product of converging agencies and, in so doing, reflect a conceptualization of identity as constructed through a series of negotiations between the perceiver and the perceived. Essentially, it is by breaking down the "unified" subject that both Picasso's *Kahnweiler* and Stein's *Picasso* stage a dialogue between the subject and the observer. By documenting the portraitist's fragmented perception(s) of the subject, *Kahnweiler* and *Picasso* similarly force the viewer or reader into a process of cognitive synthesis in order to make sense of the presented information. It is in this way that the mind of the viewer or reader, too, becomes fundamentally implicated in the construction of the subject's identity. Ultimately, the representational experiments of Picasso and Stein both challenge the conventional relationship drawn between appearance and knowledge – between perception and conception – to destabilize the assumption of a coherent, unified subjectivity. Instead, *Kahnweiler* and *Picasso* highlight that we must necessarily work together to make meaning out of the world as it appears to us and the techniques by which we represent our perception of the world to ourselves.

CONCLUSION

"These objects as appearances, conform to our mode of representation…"
- Immanuel Kant[176]

The specific innovations of Stein and Picasso speak to the transformative power of representational strategies. *Kahnweiler* and *Picasso* both reveal the ways in which our representations of the world are informed by how we experience the world, and vice versa. In 1914, *The Boston Evening Transcript* published a review of Stein's *Tender Buttons* by Robert Emons Rogers, who wrote the following: "She is impelling language to induce new states of consciousness, and in doing so language becomes with her a creative art rather than a mirror of history … she uses familiar words to create perception, conditions and states of being, never quite consciously before experienced."[177] For Stein, language was not simply a vehicle through which to document the world but, rather, a potent tool by which to create it. Significantly, Stein recognized that our representational techniques possess mind-altering capabilities; they have the power to shape our experiences and the way we conceive of those experiences.

For Picasso, art held a similar transformational potency. As Leighten argues, Picasso expressed "faith in the power of art to alter the ways in which people thought, to support the status quo or undermine it, to change the consciousness of the age…"[178] Picasso's confidence in the transformative potential of art similarly highlights that our conscious experiences – the ways that the world appears to us – are informed by social and cultural practices. Subjectivity, then, extends beyond the individual and is, instead, constructed and reconstructed in relation to the surrounding socio-cultural environment as well as how that environment is mediated through specific schools of thought and their accompanying representational conventions. While, as

[176] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 24–25.
[177] Quoted in Kirk Curnutt (eds), *The Critical Response to Gertrude Stein*, 19.
[178] Patricia Leighten, *Re-Ordering the Universe,* 113.

theories of phenomenology have shown, subjective perception is self-referential insomuch as our present experiences must be evaluated in relation to previous ones in order to retain a degree of conceptual coherence, such perceptions are also necessarily mediated through the ways we represent our experiences to ourselves – through strategies and conventions that are culturally and historically contingent.

Picasso and Stein used fragmentation and repetition to construct the subjects of their respective portraits from a simplified lexicon of geometric and linguist signs. As I have outlined, the non-sequential ordering of simplified forms tested the value of external reference points by generating a relatively self-referential system of similarity and difference. By decontextualizing their respective subjects from external reference points, both *Kahnweiler* and *Picasso* can be seen to seemingly isolate the sitters from the relational value contexts of their particular social and historical climates. And yet, as I have argued, reading the work as a completely hermetic system of interrelated components of similarity and difference cannot comprehensively account for the larger systems wherein the word or pictorial mark make meaning. As it follows, the depicted individual – expressed through a Cubist lens as a series of similarities and differences – cannot be apprehended in isolation from the representational strategies through which he or she is constructed. One needs a framework whereby to conceptualize and evaluate the relationship between similarity and difference in the first place.

While, as I have argued, Stein conceived of identity as modeled by the synthesis of successive, enacted iterations, she maintained that there was an essential distinction to be made between a theory and the mediating structures through which its tenets may be realized. In 1935, she spoke directly to this relationship, stating that repetition can only exist in the description of things: “If this existence is this thing is actually existing there can be no repetition. There is only

repetition when there are descriptions being given of these things themselves are actually existing..."[179] If we read Picasso's *Kahnweiler* through Stein's statement, the repetition of lines and shapes can be seen to document Picasso's *description* of his experience of moving around Kahnweiler during the portrait-making encounter, not Picasso's *experience* of moving around Kahnweiler nor the performed identity of Kahnweiler himself. Descriptions – here understood as repeated painterly shapes and lines – allow for experiences to be recounted and structured in a particular manner. In Stein's *Picasso*, I have argued, the writer similarly organized her perceptions of her subject in a heavily stylized, medium-specific way.

Picasso's and Stein's experiments with, and challenges to, the genre of portraiture and its related conventions demonstrate how the very concept of identity was understood as malleable and functionally contingent upon the social and cultural practices by which identity was represented and understood. As accounts of visual and literary portraiture in the European tradition have shown, historical notions of subjectivity and identity are both reflected in and informed by the representational techniques employed to depict human individuals. That said, a comprehensive analysis of Picasso's *Kahnweiler* and Stein's *Picasso* has revealed that visual art and literature also have the power to challenge the assumptions implicit in established representational strategies.

Ultimately, Picasso's and Stein's Cubist experiments with portraiture systematized representation in a way that makes us question how things appear to us. *Kahnweiler* and *Picasso* evince Picasso's and Stein's rejection of the spatial and temporal constraints of previous representational techniques in favour of capturing a dynamic portrait-making encounter whereby the relationship between the artist and the sitter was continually negotiated and re-negotiated in

[179] Stein, *Lectures in America*, 170.

both space and time. Semiotically-informed approaches illuminate how Picasso and Stein attempted to construct more hermetic representational systems, isolated from fixed spatial-temporal positions and destabilized from external points of reference. Nonetheless, the limitations of such approaches demonstrate that *Kahnweiler* and *Picasso* necessarily embody a tension between abstract and descriptive elements in order to stage Picasso's and Stein's aesthetic interventions. Furthermore, phenomenological and epistemological understandings of experience and identity reveal the processes by which Picasso and Stein translated their perceptions into highly-stylized representations. Both *Kahnweiler* and *Picasso* capture their respective author's perception of the portrayed subject and the means by which that perception is mediated by medium-specific stylistic techniques. While the fragmentation and repetition of the depicted elements emphasize the self-referential character of Picasso's and Stein's subjective observations, their subordination to a simplified lexicon of signifiers highlights how such observations were transformed through socially and historically contingent practices in order to be made sensible.

Figures

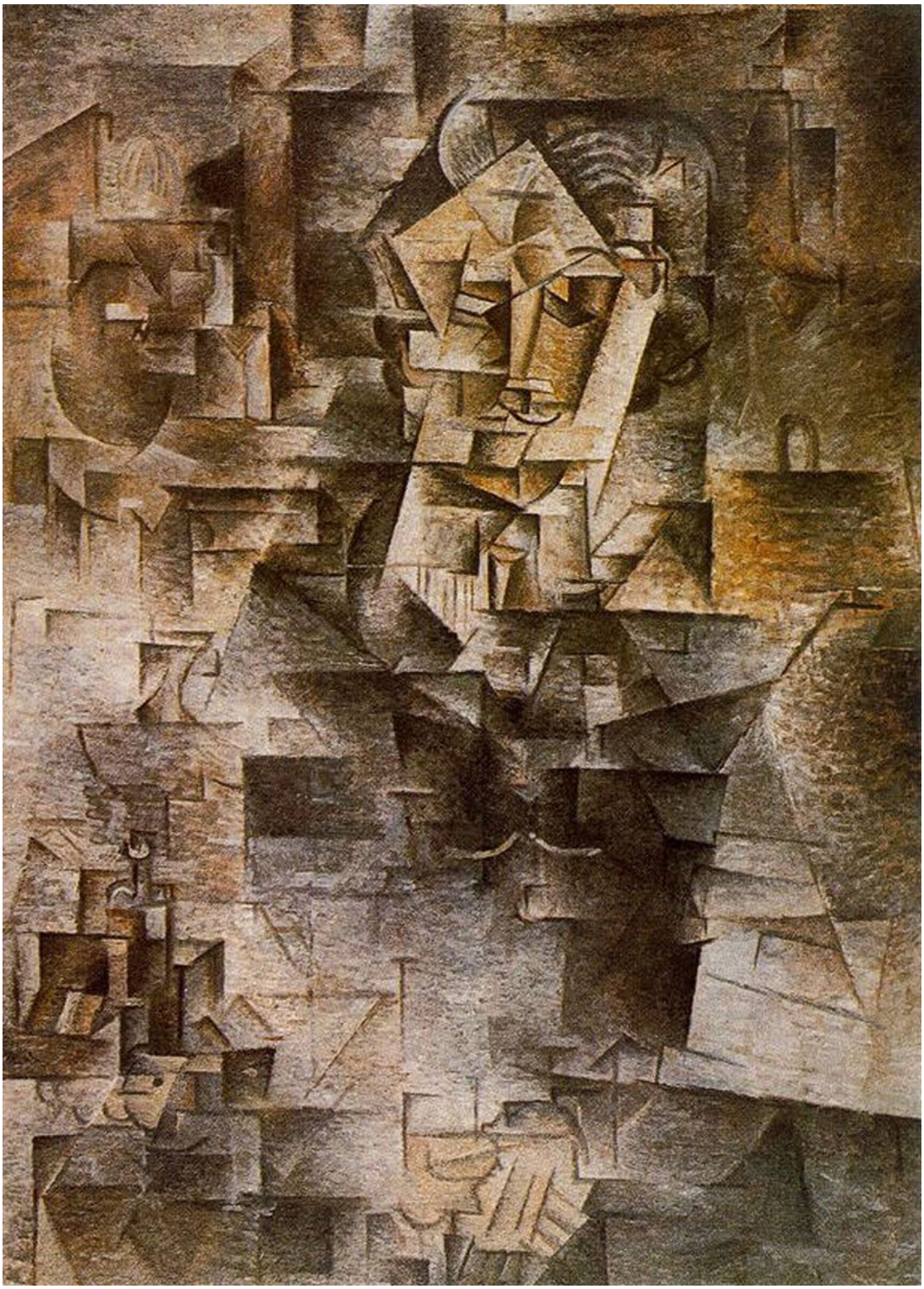
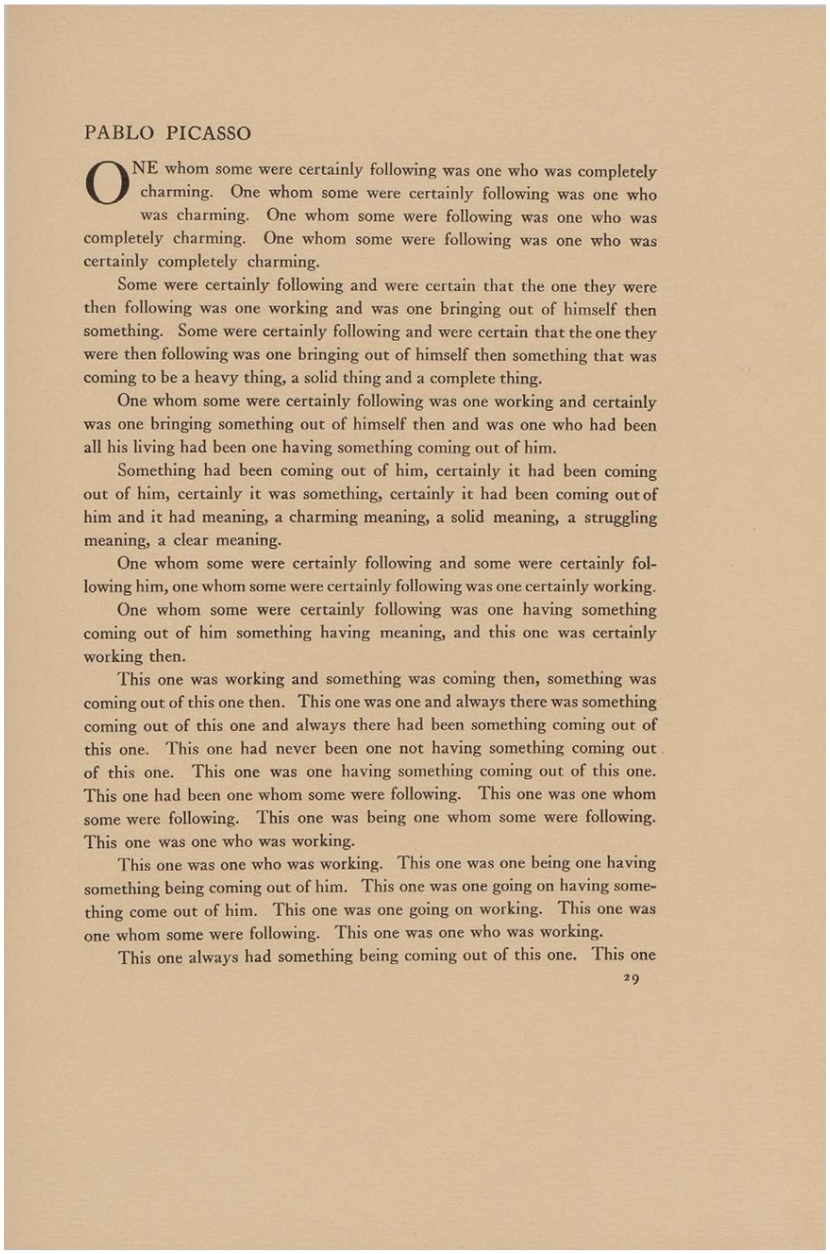


Fig. 1. Pablo Picasso, *Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler*, 1910.



PABLO PICASSO

ONE whom some were certainly following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were certainly following was one who was charming. One whom some were following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were following was one who was certainly completely charming.

Some were certainly following and were certain that the one they were then following was one working and was one bringing out of himself then something. Some were certainly following and were certain that the one they were then following was one bringing out of himself then something that was coming to be a heavy thing, a solid thing and a complete thing.

One whom some were certainly following was one working and certainly was one bringing something out of himself then and was one who had been all his living had been one having something coming out of him.

Something had been coming out of him, certainly it had been coming out of him, certainly it was something, certainly it had been coming out of him and it had meaning, a charming meaning, a solid meaning, a struggling meaning, a clear meaning.

One whom some were certainly following and some were certainly following him, one whom some were certainly following was one certainly working.

One whom some were certainly following was one having something coming out of him something having meaning, and this one was certainly working then.

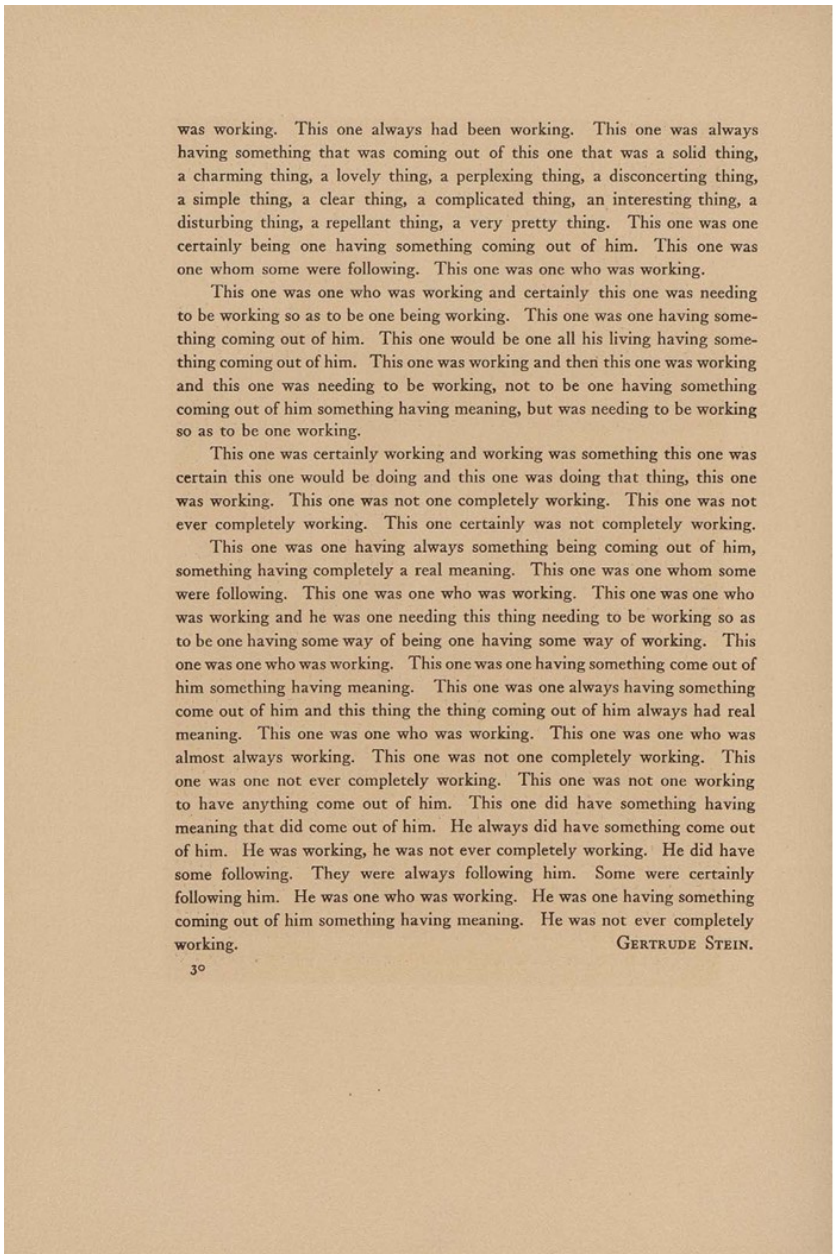
This one was working and something was coming then, something was coming out of this one then. This one was one and always there was something coming out of this one and always there had been something coming out of this one. This one had never been one not having something coming out of this one. This one was one having something coming out of this one. This one had been one whom some were following. This one was one whom some were following. This one was being one whom some were following. This one was one who was working.

This one was one who was working. This one was one being one having something being coming out of him. This one was one going on having something come out of him. This one was one going on working. This one was one whom some were following. This one was one who was working.

This one always had something being coming out of this one. This one

29

Fig. 2a. Gertrude Stein, *Picasso*, 1909.



was working. This one always had been working. This one was always having something that was coming out of this one that was a solid thing, a charming thing, a lovely thing, a perplexing thing, a disconcerting thing, a simple thing, a clear thing, a complicated thing, an interesting thing, a disturbing thing, a repellant thing, a very pretty thing. This one was one certainly being one having something coming out of him. This one was one whom some were following. This one was one who was working.

This one was one who was working and certainly this one was needing to be working so as to be one being working. This one was one having something coming out of him. This one would be one all his living having something coming out of him. This one was working and then this one was working and this one was needing to be working, not to be one having something coming out of him something having meaning, but was needing to be working so as to be one working.

This one was certainly working and working was something this one was certain this one would be doing and this one was doing that thing, this one was working. This one was not one completely working. This one was not ever completely working. This one certainly was not completely working.

This one was one having always something being coming out of him, something having completely a real meaning. This one was one whom some were following. This one was one who was working. This one was one who was working and he was one needing this thing needing to be working so as to be one having some way of being one having some way of working. This one was one who was working. This one was one having something come out of him something having meaning. This one was one always having something come out of him and this thing the thing coming out of him always had real meaning. This one was one who was working. This one was one who was almost always working. This one was not one completely working. This one was one not ever completely working. This one was not one working to have anything come out of him. This one did have something having meaning that did come out of him. He always did have something come out of him. He was working, he was not ever completely working. He did have some following. They were always following him. Some were certainly following him. He was one who was working. He was one having something coming out of him something having meaning. He was not ever completely working.

GERTRUDE STEIN.

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Fig. 2b. Gertrude Stein, *Picasso*, 1909.

Fig. 3. Hans Holbein the Younger, *Georg Gisze*, 1532.

Fig. 4. Edgar Degas, *Portrait of Edmond Duranty*, 1879.

Fig. 5. Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *Portrait of the Princesse de Broglie*, 1853.

Fig. 6. Paul Cézanne, *Portrait of Madame Cézanne*, 1885–87.

Fig. 7. Paul Cézanne, *Portrait of Madame Cézanne*, 1886–87.

Fig. 8. Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Clovis Sagot*, 1909.

Fig. 9. Pablo Picasso, *Ambroise Vollard*, 1910.

Fig. 10. Pablo Picasso, *Wilhelm Uhde*, 1910.

Fig. 11. Pablo Picasso, *Gertrude Stein*, 1905–06.

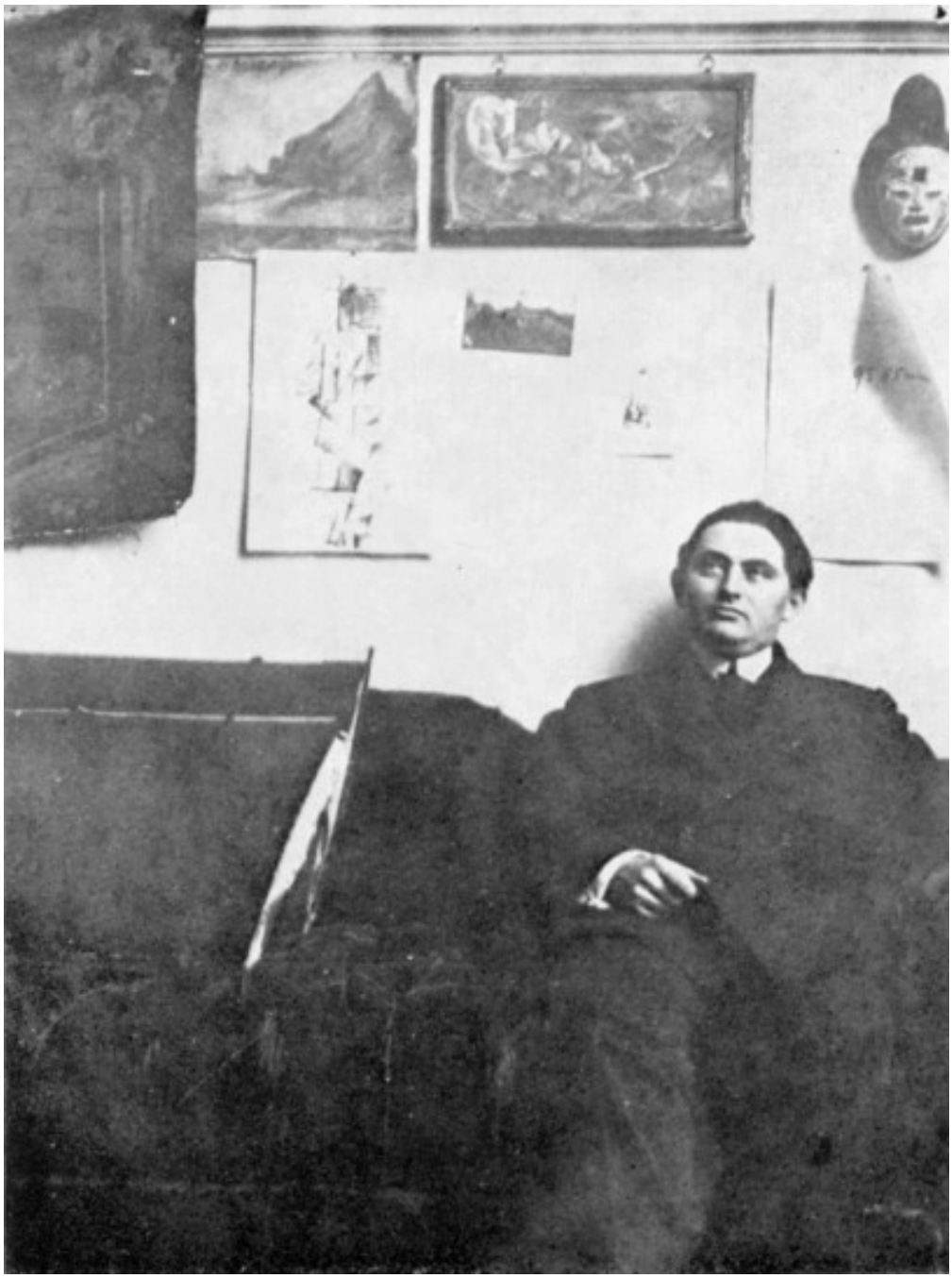

Fig. 12. Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, Photographed by Pablo Picasso.[180]

[180] Image from Penrose, "Picasso's Portrait of Kahnweiler," 131.

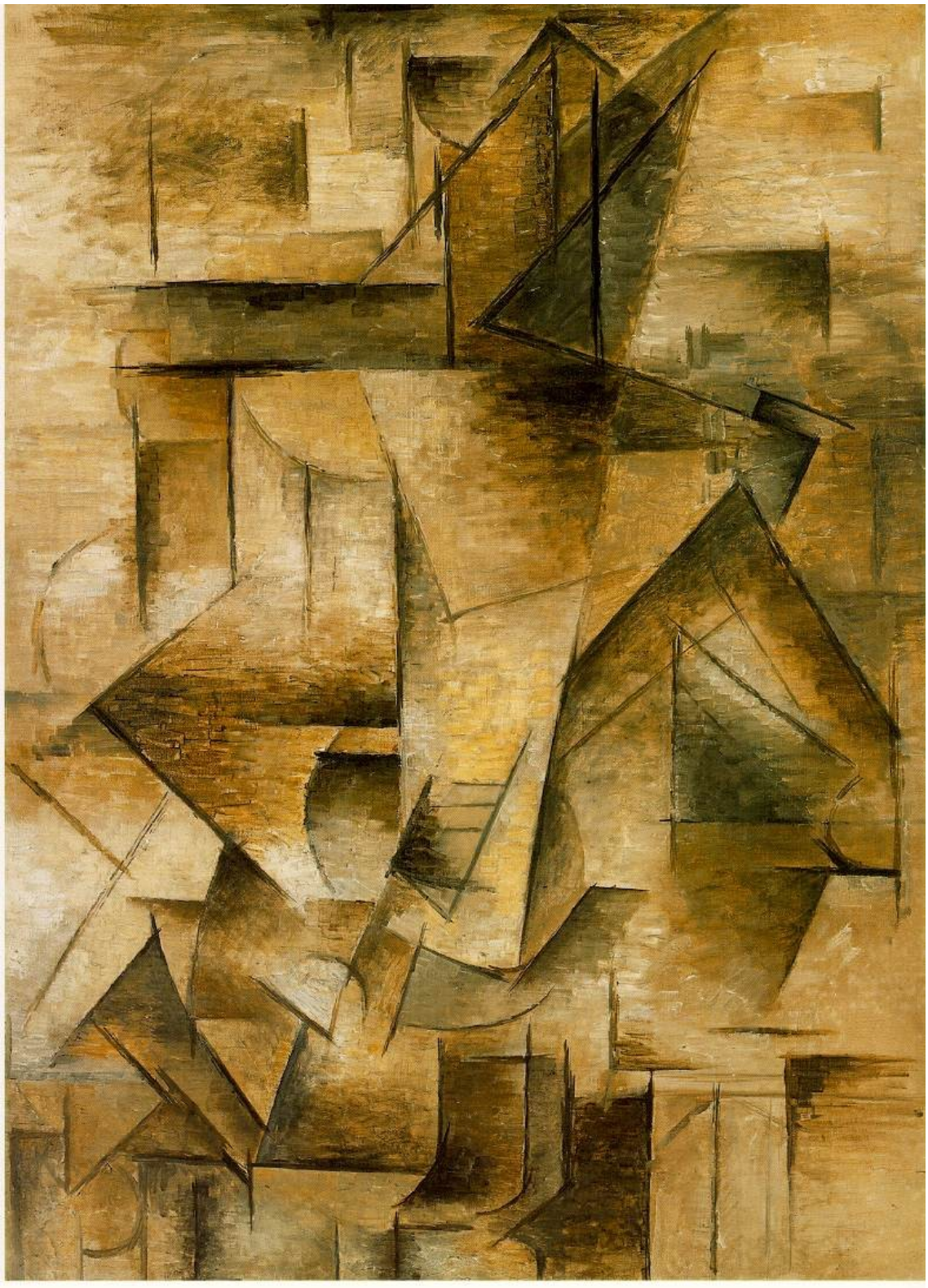

Fig. 13. Pablo Picasso, *Guitar Player*, 1910.

Fig. 14. Grebo Mask, Ivory Coast of Liberia. Painted Wood and Fiber. Musée Picasso, Paris.[181]

[181] Image from Bois, *Painting as Model,* 71.

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